MOURNING   THE ENDS

Collaborative Writing and   Performance

Maria Shantelle Alexies	Ambayec
Kristof	van Baarle
Peter	Burke
Renata	Gaspar
Sozita	Goudouna
Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu	Gros
Adham	Hafez
Jan-Tage	Kuehling
Eero	Laine
Sarah	Lucie
Juliana	Martins Rodrigues de Moraes
Evan	Moritz
Malin	Palani
Rumen	Rachev
Aneta	Stojnić

MOURNING THE ENDS

Fig. 1. Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

p. punctumbooks

spontaneous acts of scholarly combustion

ADVANCED METHODS

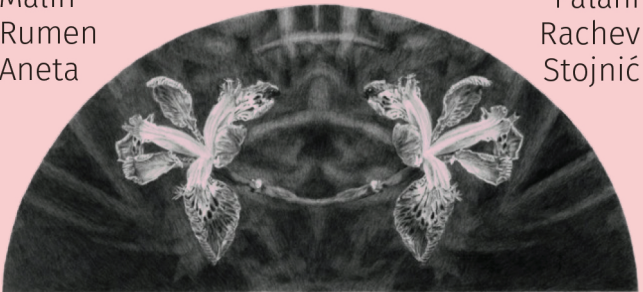# MOURNING   THE ENDS

Collaborative Writing and   Performance

Maria Shantelle Alexies   Ambayec
Kristof   van Baarle
Peter   Burke
Renata   Gaspar
Sozita   Goudouna
Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu   Gros
Adham   Hafez
Jan-Tage   Kuehling
Eero   Laine
Sarah   Lucie
Juliana   Martins Rodrigues de Moraes
Evan   Moritz
Malin   Palani
Rumen   Rachev
Aneta   Stojnić

Contents

Acknowledgments

Despite our expansive notions of co-authorship and collaboration, there are still a few people who were essential to the creation and curation of this work who are not authors of it. Perhaps the foremost of those is Felipe Cervera, who started the project with all of us but had to withdraw for personal reasons after a short but intense period of working with us. Some time later, we shared a completed draft of the manuscript with Felipe along with Karen Malpede, Christine Marks, Adelheid Mers, Jeroen Peeters, and Katie Schaag for feedback. They contributed comments to the same shared online document and, in the spirit of the project, they commented and discussed the work together, agreeing at times and offering counterpoints at others. This cohort of outside readers, known to some of us, but not necessarily acquainted with each other beyond their comments on our work, pushed us to rethink a number of assumptions and to open our thinking significantly beyond some of our sometimes insular arguments and questions. We are also immensely thankful for those reports from

How to Cite This Work

Many citation and style guides suggest that for works with more than a few authors, the first two or three authors are to be listed by name and followed by et al. (and others). This is perhaps a way of streamlining bibliographies and footnotes and it may accurately represent the labor relations of the publication in disciplines that subscribe to ranked authorship and function within more hierarchical research and publishing models. We might suggest, however, that in horizontal or lateral modes of knowledge creation, it is less than ideal to reduce those beyond the first few names to the designation of "others." So in light of the processes of researching and writing this book, we recommend when citing this work that all author names be listed in bibliographies. Some publications will be more open than others to this bending of style guide rules, but we think it important to mark the inclusion and labor of all who worked and researched and wrote this book. So, if citing this work in a publication that follows the *Chicago Manual*

of Style, 18th edition, for instance, the bibliographic entry would look like this:

Ambayec, Maria Shantelle Alexies, Kristof van Baarle, Peter Burke, Renata Gaspar, Sozita Goudouna, Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu Gros, Adham Hafez, Jan-Tage Kuehling, Eero Laine, Sarah Lucie, Juliana Martins Rodrigues de Moraes, Evan Moritz, Malin Palani, Rumen Rachev, and Aneta Stojnić. *Mourning the Ends: Collaborative Writing and Performance*. punctum books, 2025.

Preface:
Methods and Procedures

How do you write a book with fifteen co-authors from Mexico, Egypt, Brazil, USA, Greece, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Belgium, France, Turkey, Portugal, Germany, Philippines, and Serbia? This is perhaps the first question many of us are asked when describing the work to friends and colleagues. We are performers, artists, dancers, curators, dramaturgs, psychoanalysts, researchers, writers, and academics who believe the answer to this question is written in and through the pages that follow. This book performs a way of working, an invitation to the future of performance studies, to others in the arts and humanities, to our colleagues inside and outside of universities and departments, and to each other to find commonalities

and communities and write through them, perform them.

Our procedures and "methodology," as we discuss them, may be closer to an *ethos* or a mode of engagement, a way of working that stems from our own, individual wants or needs to work with others. But that might not be what people want to know when they ask how fifteen scholars from across the globe co-authored a book on mourning, collaboration, and the various and multiple "ends" we face and experience. We think people might rather be asking about the procedures of the work itself. Quite literally, how does one write with so many or think with so many in ways that produce a coherent text?

We are writing this note about our processes and methodology at the end of our co-authored initiative, asking ourselves: How did we arrive here? Therefore this methodology, perhaps like any other, is also a mythology. Rather than a "how to?" instruction, here we are laying out procedures that this particular ad-hoc collective devised. What worked for us may be an example for future collaborative writings but if there is a guideline on how to, it's: try to listen for what emerges from the group, and devise your methodology as you go.

The work began with a shared Google document with an invitation to write and to respond to others.

The initial prompt was written by the organizers of a conference, some of whom are authors on this project. For some of us, the online document and the Zoom meetings are the only virtual "locations" where we have ever met. At the first online meeting, as with most of the subsequent meetings, we began by discussing what had been written on the document. At first some of this was introductory—who are you, what do you do, what drew you to this project and its themes? In the early stages, we played with the possibilities of the Google document, and developed a shared way of working together. For instance, an early document suggested how we might engage with the document, including "lose hold of your prose. Let it go for others to play with," and "work on the text, instinctively." Then, as we proceeded, what became shared in the document grew to encompass larger ideas and philosophies, personal, profound, and mundane experiences and details. Some might share a link or a story or a piece of news from their part of the world or a description of performance or work that related to the ideas we were working with. At some points, we responded to text with text, and at other times, we used the suggesting feature or the comment feature in Google docs.

In a meeting, we might discuss ideas or questions that have emerged in writing, then we might write

together in the document with our microphones silenced for a set amount of time, or we might edit the text together. Writing it here, it sounds rather simple, like a seminar or friendly but informed chat. Like both, however, it was also more complex as new ideas emerged from experience and expertise as they were shared with the group. As a group, then, we devised the next prompt or score for everyone to respond to in the document. Sometimes they were quite rudimentary—add 500 words throughout the document or add two or three citations you think are relevant—and other times they were quite complex. For instance, we would sometimes task ourselves with remixing and revising the work, asking everyone to cut and paste material into new sections to radically reorganize the document or to comment on all of the material as if we were leaving notes to ourselves. At times we broke into subgroups who would then meet independently. One time these subgroups were tasked with creating an outline of a section, another time with revising a particular set of paragraphs or pages. At the next meeting, we discussed and often traded groups or responsibilities. Prompts or tasks were arrived at through discussion and in response. By the time we were just a few meetings into our work together, words were shared readily and it was at times difficult

to understand where one's own contribution had ended. Paragraphs were broken into sentences, sentences merged with others. A clause might be borrowed and moved across pages or expanded into its own paragraph. Sometimes our phrases lost context and needed to be recontextualized and reframed.

Coherent and transparent framing was an extremely important aspect of the process. The meetings nearly always ended at exactly one hour and the last point of business was to decide what the next piece of work would be and who would send the session's summary by email. Not unlike how it works in psychoanalysis, the clear framing helped both contain the process and facilitate the process. In later stages, when we were working on preparing the text to submit to publishers, we started organizing intensive three- to five-day workshops, where we would have two two-hour meetings each day. Not everyone showed up for the meeting every time. Sometimes the group was larger and other times it would be just three or four people working together. After every meeting one of us would write the summary and share it with the entire group, so that whoever showed up next time could pick up where the previous workshop left off.

Welcome!

This document is one of our shared online spaces. As an opening to the collective and collaborative work we will be doing before and during the time we have together in Rijeka, please add some simple info below about your work and ideas around "ends" and collaboration. Let's say at least 100 words for now? Links, notes, resources are all welcome. What drew you to this stream? Where do you want to go with all of this? If you want to re-read the initial call for papers, you can still find it here.

If you are logged in with a Google account, the document will keep track of what you wrote. You can decide if you want to additionally add your name in the document. Please add your material **before March 23rd, 2020.**

You can check back as often as you like to read what others are posting and you might consider responding to something that someone else has written. **Please write directly in the document** (i.e. **do not** use the comment function). For now, we won't edit or revise each other's prose, but please do respond to other contributions following full paragraph breaks. So, if you want to leave room for others to contribute or respond, press "Enter" twice to leave a space between paragraphs. Like this…

We're just starting to wake up and stretch out our collaborative writing muscles with this, so formality is not necessary, even as we maintain a respectful space. We can discuss how we might want to organize the document as things develop. This is an opportunity to start working and thinking together. The goal is to tend towards collaborative writing right from the start.

Also! If you might notice that others are on the document at the same time as you (you'll see their initials or profile images in little circles in the upper-right hand corner of the page, near the blue "Share" button). Feel free to say hi using the chat function, which is the little box with three white lines, also in the upper-right hand corner of the page, between the circles and the "Share" button. Google doesn't save the chat dialogue after you log out. Consider adding it to the doc, if it's an important conversation. See you here soon!

So, if we were to neatly and prescriptively explain our devices and the procedures, we might put them in a list like this:

1. Assemble an ad hoc group of people broadly interested in a topic or set of topics.
2. Open a Google document or other shared online document, decide on an initial prompt or set of questions, and invite everyone to respond and write.
3. Hold a meeting to discuss the contents of the document.
4. Meetings should last one hour, so the meetings are contained even if there may not be an end date for the larger project.
5. Before the end of the meeting, develop a prompt, task, or assignment for everyone to complete and decide on a timeframe for it to be completed. Try different styles of prompts—think beyond writing a set number of words to include moving text and restructuring; experimenting with performative writing, bold claims, or thesis statements; editing, revising, and remixing; working in smaller groups with different tasks; etc.
6. Set a meeting for the end of the decided-upon time frame. Work at a pace that enables the

group and their schedules and lives beyond the project.

7. After each meeting, have one person write a summary of the meeting and email it to the entire group. Rotate this task among people in the group after each meeting.

8. Repeat 3–7 for a while.

9. When it seems useful, schedule an intensive workshop to deal with complex issues or matters of form that have surged to the fore. Consider adding comments as "notes to self" to expand or elaborate further on points in advance of the workshop. (A note to oneself indicates more clearly who will attempt to resolve the comment rather than editing or correcting the work of others. Of course, others may also find ways to address and resolve the comments.) State a clear goal of what is to be accomplished before the end of the intensive workshop.

10. Have authors sign up for workshop times and dates on the shared Google doc and cancel any time with two or fewer authors.

11. Hold the intensive workshop over three to five successive days with two sessions each day— morning and afternoon, for instance, to account

for differing time zones—with each session lasting two hours each.

12. Keep track of the names of authors who attend the meetings.

13. During the intensive workshop, actively work on the text together—writing, revising, recomposing—sometimes working with comments and sometimes resolving comments, sometimes moving section by section and sometimes sentence by sentence. At certain stages we worked by commenting in the documents and we would not proceed if the comments were not resolved following unanimous agreement. Whatever the work, agree to it and then do it together.

14. Keep notes of what was accomplished in each workshop session and email the whole group at the end of each session for the participants of the following session to easily pick up the thread of work.

15. Celebrate that you completed the goal of the intensive workshop. If you didn't quite make it, try to finish asynchronously and then celebrate.

16. Repeat 3–7 until it is time to hold another intensive workshop, then repeat 9–15.

17. Decide together when the work is ready to be read by someone or people outside the group

for feedback—their response may prompt more meetings or intensive workshops.

18. Throughout the process, each one contributes according to their ability and needs.

19. Everyone who works gets credit in an alphabetical list of names on the byline or some other, maybe randomized, order, but not in any sort of ranked order; relatedly, credit requires work.

20. Allow space to leave the project and also to return. Some may be absent and then return later. Check in with those who are absent to see if they are okay.

21. Work with whomever shows up and take the initiative to send reminders before the session. Practice inviting everyone (back) to the work.

22. Discuss before making major decisions, like moving sections or chapters, or deleting text.

23. Raise questions of style or concerns about ideologically vexed arguments—discuss together, write together.

24. Invent new ways of working, thinking, and writing together.

25. Share with others.

Having written this, we admit that we hesitate to codify it as instructions because we did not come up with any of this in advance! That is to say, we were

not working from this list, it was made retrospectively. So, some of this might work for your group and some might not. Everyone needs to sort through this with others. Throughout the text that follows, we include some of our writing prompts to each other as images. These were used to generate prose between meetings and might be of interest to others in their work, to expand upon, adapt, or discard depending on the project. We also include some screenshots of discussion that, we hope, helps to unpack our process and to see some of the thinking behind our shared "we." We discuss this common pronoun throughout the book. At this point it is and has its own voice, even as many voices have gone into it. The screenshots, perhaps, give a sense of how that "we" was crafted, how it was compressed, and even how it neither encapsulates all of us nor is in opposition to any of us.

All of this is to say, we want to offer a suggestion, an experiment, a praxis. We feel the need to reposition—our physical selves, our thinking, our collaborative processes—to each other on the planet, and so we have given it a try. It's time consuming. Frustrating. At many times we worked without knowing a clear path forward, but these messy and experimental processes are necessary because there are few, if any, established methodologies for collaborative or collective scholarship in the arts and humanities.

institutions. Either excluded from, rejected by, or rejecting the institution, Sholette claims collectives force the elite art institutions of the world to view their own arbitrary value structure.

That is, if we are increasing collective mourning and facing ecological ends, how do we move and make together? And perhaps there is a kind of gift spiral that can only emerge in 100%. Time, in which it will not be enough to waste the hours we reclaim, nor to share them, but within which a new relation to time must emerge. Perhaps in the furtive laboratories where tactics are invented, we are only now discovering a mode of laziness that manifests as revolutionary sabotage. A collective stalemate. Perhaps here can we finally put on la perruque to end all perruque."What about collectives that choose not to reveal their individual identities? Could we would we dare do this? Collectives usually differ from cooperatives in that they are not necessarily focused upon an economic benefit or saving. If we were to relinquish our individual identities, would we also relinquish cashing in on the appraisal of our academic performance? Does the collective change the way a performance is consumed ?

MOURNING
Mourning Continuum

Mourning has become a pillar for the development of performance theories, i.e. Peggy Phelan's, Herbert Blau, and André Lepecki's publications. The understanding of performance as something that happens in the present and leaves nothing but traces in memory has become a cornerstone to performance studies in the last thirty years. Mourning was overvalued as the emotional/sensorial site of performance, and it was linked to a fantasized, not real, end. While theorists were mourning the ephemerality of performance, performance was alive and well in festivals, theatres and universities. Now that performance faces its actual extinction with theatres closed, universities online and festivals cancelled, reality shatters fantasy and challenges the way mourning was used as one of the backbones of its theorization.

Malin Palani Nov 11, 2020
This point seems to be crucial. Although, I wonder how we are (collectives) working outside systems of exchange/capital (economic benefit). Or, is it that we just Show more

Evan Moritz Nov 11, 2020
Or, how are are collectives engaging with broader notions of economy and capital. For instance, I can imagine collectives in a society where capital is no longer central to the society's economic structure, but I think the notion of a cooperative might have to undergo some redefinition.

Sarah Lucie Nov 10, 2020
Do we understand this "collaboration" section as an introduction, or as the first topic of study unto itself?

Sozita Goudouna Nov 10, 2020
Perhaps it would make sense to start the book from this section and integrate collaboration/ in the "mourning of sigle authorship" section, although we have challenged the entire mourning section during our latest discussions

An essential part of our claim is that the practice of releasing control of one's prose and ideas (which are both considered property under regimes of capital), and of contributing to a collective, invites other opportunities, and allows for mourning and an eco-conscious ethics. "The ends," then, both marks the ends of the singular voice and yet demands a situated approach—a collective particularity. This is especially fraught given that, as one peer reviewer noted, the prevailing winds of academic thought are pushing us towards situatedness and how, possibly, can a collective "we" composed of fifteen individuals from very different parts of the world be situated anywhere but with those individuals? We can only rehearse the possibilities here, examining and asking again how the singular relates to the other, and how the ends of singular worlds are interrelated with others.

To imagine another world, to perform it, to enact it—is to embrace the world-making potentiality of performance. Our collaborative gesture is an ethically conditioned activation of what it means to do something together: to create together, to write together, to realize the worlds and lives that we desire together while recognizing and caring for our separation and differences.

Introduction

"I am overwhelmed. I don't know how to live anymore."
— Anonymous[1]

"What do you do when your world starts to fall apart? I go for a walk, and if I'm really lucky, I find mushrooms."
— Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*[2]

---

1 During the COVID-19 pandemic in the late months of 2020, these words were overheard by a member of our writing collective.

2 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 1.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that the world as we know it faces many possible endings. Recent data shows over 7 million humans have died from COVID-19.[3] Since early 2020, social critics, academics, and activists have noted that COVID-19 has laid bare the structural inequities that condition societies, from ongoing racial injustices to disparities in healthcare and education to the dignities and indignities of "essential" work, marked largely by the risk of losing one's life. The pandemic appears to make visible the contrast between those who continue to increase their financial wealth or who can insulate themselves against loss, and those who suffer on or over the edge of collapse. This, even as the histories of exploitation and extraction that realize the violences of inequity are ongoing and extensive. The fault lines are clear in a globalized system built on racial and ethnic assaults, ecological destruction, and social policies that advantage markets and capital over lives and the public good. Such systems can no longer be supported and are not capable of supporting themselves. We are among the ends.

3   "WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard," *World Health Organization,* https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/ deaths.

The scale of the ends is sometimes difficult to comprehend. The planet is currently undergoing the "sixth mass extinction,"[4] a unique event in the history of the world as it has been shaped by humans as the primary force of climate change. It is marked by rates of extinction that exceed the background geological and biological extinction rate by percentages in the hundreds or thousands depending on the scientific study.[5] The loss of biodiversity and mass death in

4   The sixth mass extinction is also referred to as the Holocene or Anthropocene extinction. See, for instance, "Study Finds Human-Driven Mass Extinction Is Eliminating Entire Branches of the Tree of Life," *Stanford Report,* September 18, 2023, https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2023/09/human-driven-mass-extinction-eliminating-entire-genera; Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Henry Holt & Co., 2014); Ron Wagler, "The Anthropocene Mass Extinction: An Emerging Curriculum Theme for Science Educators," *The American Biology Teacher* 73, no. 2 (2011): 78–83; and Mike Walker et al., "Formal Definition and Dating of the GSSP (Global Stratotype Section and Point) for the Base of the Holocene Using the Greenland NGRIP Ice Core, and Selected Auxiliary Records," *Journal of Quaternary Science* 24, no. 1 (2009): 3–17.

5   See, for example, Gerardo Ceballos et al., "Accelerated Modern Human–Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction," *Science Advances* 1, no. 5 (2015), and S.L.

nearly every category of life on the planet evokes and appears to foreshadow the extinction of the human species. At least we're not ending alone.

Mourning the ends brought us together. The context of the pandemic, and our need for community brought us to this project. We are writing together despite our corpo-material boundaries, situated in different parts of the world and experiencing the ends in different contexts and with different pressures and complications. Despite this, here and throughout the authors use "we" to describe our shared thoughts and ideas. We occasionally speak from the first or third person, especially when discussing a particular experience one or only a few of us have had; nonetheless, we approach and understand our use of "we" as imperfect and encompassing the ways we overlap as artists and scholars and also the many ways our individual lives diverge and diffract. This "we" is a sum of collective individuations, yet the specificity of our material selves is our guiding methodology. This "we" is a transindividual author among individuals, among the ends. Passing from one to another, our transindividual mourning of the ends names the systematic

Pimm et al., "The Biodiversity of Species and Their Rates of Extinction, Distribution, and Protection," *Science* 344, no. 6187 (2014).

unity of interior and exterior collective individuations.[6] As Irit Rogoff and Bernard Stiegler present it: "[The] concept of 'transindividuation' is one that does not rest with the individuated 'I' or with the interindividuated 'We,' but is the process of co-individuation within a pre-individuated milieu and in which both the 'I' and the 'We' are transformed through one another."[7] The transformation is not necessarily aligned with production, but is a question, a provocation to humanistic and artistic norms that privilege individual achievement and performance.[8]

6   See Gilbert Simondon, "The Position of the Problem of Ontogenesis," trans. Gregory Flanders, *Parrhesia* 7 (2009): 4–16, and Etienne Balibar, "Philosophies of the Transindividual: Spinoza, Marx, Freud," trans. Mark G.E. Kelly, *Australasian Philosophical Review* 2, no. 1 (2018): 5–25.

7   Bernard Stiegler and Irit Rogoff, "Transindividuation," *e-flux* 14 (2010), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/14/61314/transindividuation/.

8   Here, we might see this impetus towards new and shared intellectual and artistic formations in relation to T.J. Demos's association of ends and knowing: "It is clear: we are in the midst of a world-historical, cosmological event, an event that is quickly making the world we once knew historical. I consider it as a great politico-ontological unraveling that challenges the limits of knowledge itself." T.J. Demos, *Beyond the World's*

Zoom details for all meetings of this project:
Join Zoom Meeting
https://buffalo.zoom.us/j/9434163293337pwd=Y2lZL1Q2eEVreWlyK01hcXp5Y3ZKQT09
Meeting ID: 943 4163 2933

April 15/16
Thursday: 4pm (IA), 5pm (NY), 6pm (BR) 11pm (EU)
Friday: 5am (PH), 7am (AU), 9am (NZ)

https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html?iso=20210422T1200008p1=450
6&p2=179&p3=233&p4=48&p5=145&p6=152&p7=22

WORKSHOP 2 – writing and editing
RSVP's here and below from the Doodle

Use this Doodle link to RSVP:
https://doodle.com/poll/ursabaaz46iafu9b?utm_source=poll&utm_medium=link

April 22/23: WORKSHOP 2, Session A
Thursday: 7am (IA), 8am (NY), 9am (BR) 2pm (EU), 8pm (PH),
Friday: 10pm (AU), 12midnight (NZ

April 22/23: WORKSHOP 2, Session B
Thursday: 2pm (IA), 3pm (NY), 4pm (BR) 9pm (EU)
Friday: 3am (PH), 5am (AU), 7am (NZ)

Transindividuation challenges certain forms of subjectivity and embodiment, particularly in relation to concepts of authorship. It is a critique of the individual and individualism as "the irreducible basis of ontology, epistemology, and politics."[9] Thinkers of transindividuation as a political concept seek to find a new relation between individuals and society, differing from a vision in which the first is reduced to a consequence of the latter, or the latter is just the sum of the first. Through the act of collective writing we argue against an individualism that fails to attend to the social constitution of the individual. We perceive the situated individual as always already extending beyond themselves. Thus, as co-authors of this text we explore our situatedness by extending beyond ourselves, beyond our specific names, titles, and occupations. The "we" voiced from our shared writing attempts to dismantle Enlightenment ideas of individual sovereignty perpetuated by modernist approaches to single authorship. The ends, we think, demand that we explore a different ethos of work and collaborative

End: Arts of Living at the Crossing (Duke University Press, 2020), 7.

9   Jason Read, "The Production of Subjectivity: From Transindividuality to the Commons," *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 70 (2010): 115.

approach to thinking and writing. Transindividuation and collaborative writing are attempts to share ends, to jointly find meaning and to mourn not alone, but together, in a transindividual "we." Rather than a privileged or a royal "we," this work rather encourages the feeling of one's powerlessness, one's not-knowing, and the potential in those positions, especially in the face of so many and such pervasive ends.

Despite various ends encountered by so many and in so many different parts of the world, and even within the contexts of so many deaths and suffering throughout history, we also know that ends as a concept cannot serve as a singular narrative lest it reify the master narratives it describes. That is, the ends are not new phenomena and we experience this moment of death and suffering differently. Indeed, totalizing claims of human extinction overwrite the multiplicity of ends already experienced. The realities of extinction have already affected entire cultures since colonialism, and continue to do so through global imperialism.

EXTINCTIONS

One of us explains to the group that *Napë* is the name the Yanomami people, who live deep in the Amazon

Forest in the border of Brazil and Venezuela, give to non-natives that come to their land, be they Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English, French, or whatever. Settlers' descendants are also *napë* because the word defines a type of subjectivity, meaning a person that favors the accumulation of things ("the merchandise people"). Eduardo Viveiros de Castro asserts that *napë*s are "representatives of these barbaric and exotic people from overseas, with their absurd inability to understand the forest."[10] With the *napë,* the extinction of life forms and cultures occurs. Therefore, when one of us writes in a shared online document, "the world as we know it is facing the threat of extinction," many of us who agree and write in response are considering a singular world already built in violence and not those cultures whose worlds have already been destroyed. Brazilian philosopher and indigenous activist Ailton Krenak underscores: "A guy who left Europe and went down on a tropical beach left a trail of death wherever he went. The individual did not know that he was a walking plague, a bacteriological war in motion, an end of the world; neither knew the infected victims. For the people who received that

10 Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert, *A queda do céu: Palavras de um xamã Yanomami* (Companhia das Letras, 2011), 9. Translation by author.

visit and died, the end of the world was in the 16th century."[11] The narrative that Krenak conveys is the destructive foundation of colonial histories. We know, and we all know differently, that the ends are ongoing and rolling forward, they do not come with the finality assumed in extinction.

Current, future, and past ends are part of what Cameroonian philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe has coined as *necropolitics,*[12] a regime of sovereign power operating in zones or at a certain scale—the colony, the plantation—in which a state of exception and a state of siege work together in the creation of death worlds, both for human and non-human lives. Necropolitical ecologies,[13] climate

---

11 Ailton Krenak, *O amanhã não está à venda* (Companhia das Letras, 2020), 38. Translation by author.

12 Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40.

13 Meredith J. DeBoom, "Climate Necropolitics: Ecological Civilization and the Distributive Geographies of Extractive Violence," *Anthropocene: Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 111, no. 3 (2021): 900–912.

necropolitics,[14] and theories of the *plantationocene*[15] that settle the massive scale of current ecological disaster within the history of invasion, colonization, and extermination of the colonized "Other" give account of the necessity of a situated approach to ecology *and* (post-)colonial history. As writers Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Déborah Danowski state: "'End of the world' only has a determinate meaning in these discourses—on the condition that one determines at the same time *for whom* this world that ends is a *world,* who is the worldly or 'worlded' being who *defines the end.*"[16]

Our book approaches these overwhelming and sometimes all-encompassing matters through rehearsing the concept of the "ends" as a contemporary shared sense of the world, worlding, and the

---

14 Connor Joseph Cavanagh and David Himmelfarb, "'Much in Blood and Money': Necropolitical Ecology on the Margins of the Uganda Protectorate," *Antipode* 47, no. 1 (2015): 55–73.

15 Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (2015): 159–65. See also Malcolm Ferdinand, *A Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Carribean World,* trans. Anthony Paul Smith (Polity Press, 2021).

16 Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World* (Polity Press, 2017), 20.

ends of both. And we do so through performance and performance studies because among the group, this is our shared vocabulary and the foundation that brought us together in the first place. But we do so as well because "performance" can be a useful medium and perspective when it comes to rehearsing ends. Our group initially emerged out of a conference call for participants through Performance Studies international (PSi). As an organization that embraces experimental formats and the dispersed and fluid nature of much of performance studies work and scholarship, PSi itself is perhaps a kind of shared mode or ethos. When the conference in Rijeka, Croatia, did not proceed in 2020,[17] we intuitively decided to stay connected, to exchange and to find out what we could do together.

Like the ends, the field of performance studies is contested and has fraught genealogies as it draws from different disciplines and is still relatively nascent

---

17 For further explication of the research threads of the canceled PSi conference, see Kevin Brown et al., "Postmortem: On Process and Collaborative Editing," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 36, no. 1 (2021): 13–21, and Kristof van Baarle et al., "Collaboration and Co-Finitude: An Agenda of Care and Ends," *Performance Research* 27, nos. 6–7 (2022): 15–25.

in its development,[18] but our shared approaches to performance and performance studies have overlapped with certain shared references and readings. Together, we perceive performance studies as a practice and discipline that connects deeply with questions and matters of ephemerality and disappearance. The writing of Peggy Phelan echoes with our group today, "performance's being [...] becomes

18 The field of performance studies, as those in our group engage with it, could be understood as emerging from two particular foundations: one being the notion of performance "broadly construed," building from studies in anthropology and philosophy concerned with ritual and the performances of everyday life, such as Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), and Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* ([1969] 2011) and *From Ritual to Theatre* (1982), and two, the notion of the "performative" emerging from speech communication, oral interpretation, and rhetoric, as in J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* ([1962] 1975). The development of performance studies as a field continues to resist a singular definition, instead inviting debate and interdisciplinarity. For instance, see the collection of interviews addressing the question, Diana Taylor and Marcos, eds., Steuernagel, *What Is Performance Studies?* (Duke University Press, 2015), as well as Jon McKenzie's comment and ensuing responses in "Is Performance Studies Imperialist?" *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 4 (2006): 5–8.

Possibilities for this document
(or how to engage with this document)

Let go of your prose. Similarly, build on someone else's ideas. Manipulate the text; enter wherever and exit wherever. Edit, don't suggest or add comments. Co-create. If you're logged into a Google account, Google Docs remembers who contributed what, and it stores all the versions of the document. Don't worry about keying your name. You don't need it, for now.

itself through disappearance."[19] That disappearance haunts performance and our work like the "congenial, albeit often secret relation, between futures and ends."[20] To study performance is to rehearse the ends, to try to hold something, a moment, that cannot come back. And, indeed, to perform is to understand that this local and ephemeral event can only reach beyond its limited time and space through the common and collective memories of those who witness it. At the same time we cannot but consider the implications of Rebecca Schneider's passionate argument about performance that can be engaged as what remains, rather than what disappears.[21] Performance traditions, habits and practices, and ghosts and memories of what has passed all do remain. Schneider challenges us in performance studies by focusing on the ways re-performance disrupts the relationship between performance and death, namely, the end.

19 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Routledge, 1993), 146.
20 Peggy Phelan, "Introduction: The Ends of Performance," in *The Ends of Performance,* eds. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane (New York University Press, 1998), 5.
21 Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 100–108.

In a time when the horizon seems out of reach, when the outlook is dire, and "the slow cancellation of the future"[22] makes it difficult to imagine what might possibly remain, the notion of ends provides a way to dwell and to mourn, to care with others. Can mourning and ends be commons that enable us to write, work, and live differently? Indeed, our ends, like this book, like performance, are and must open collective potentials. In the spirit of transindividuation as a form of institutional critique and basis for social transformation we argue for collaborative ends and perform them here in our shared writing as a way of thinking and commoning amidst colonial legacies, the progression of capital, and rolling climate emergencies. The arts and humanities, however collaboratively imagined, will not resolve these matters, but we might find ways to live and find endings among them. We are thus rehearsing a collectivity that sits within and beyond institutions, influenced and directed by climate and other catastrophes and the COVID-19 pandemic. Collective writing becomes and enables an act of mourning as we look to other performance practices that ritualize and reenact the end.

22 Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Zer0 Books, 2014).

THE IMPROBABLE "WE"

We, the people working on this book, write and think together, joined by a shared "we"—a "we" that has been argued over, debated, shared, and withdrawn. It is a "we" that is arrived at through consensus and disagreement. We all write and we all revise. If we disagree, we write and revise. It is a potentially frustrating "we," an impenetrable "we," and an improbable "we." It is a "we" that performs collectivity in the face of solitary individualization, an attempt at togetherness despite the distance among our various "I"s. How can so many individuals write with a shared voice? Perhaps with patience, time, work, and a sense of acceptance and purpose.

Prior to this project, we had not worked together, and many of us did not even know each other before we began our virtual meetings in the spring of 2020. For some of us, our online document and Zoom meetings are the only "locations" where we have ever met. We are performers, artists, dancers, curators, dramaturgs, researchers, writers, and academics from different parts of the world and we think and write about ends. Our native and lived-in contexts within and beyond the borders of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Ser-

bia, Turkey, and the US necessarily demand something different from us and from the field. The ends have been quite tangible for some of us. The pandemic has affected each one of us, our communities, and countries in different ways and at different times and we have come to know something of one another through this non-hierarchical and democratic process. Through the process of thinking and then writing together a unique ad-hoc community emerged, perhaps also from a need for a community in the times of extreme isolation. Perhaps some of the undiscussed, yet performed, agreements of this ad-hoc community—kindness, openness, and generosity—emerged spontaneously from an intrinsic need for togetherness and sublimation in the time of isolation and death.

Even while a shared ethos and commitment to collective work brings us together across time zones and geographic positions around the planet, we didn't start writing with an established methodology. Many authors in our group draw from different sets of experience (artistic, political, organizational) in understanding and engaging with the processes of working with others. For some of us, writing is second nature, for some of us it is not our medium. The experiences that make this collaborative writing possible stem from individual authors' work in devised and other process-oriented forms of theater and performance,

as well as feminist, anarchist, or communal spaces and organizations.

Our writing has developed in a series of stages that might be broadly defined as a horizontal structure. We have met over the past years, sharing thoughts on Zoom and writings on several (many!) online documents, looking for a rhythm of working that is open to all or most of us, confronting some of the above-mentioned divisions, rehearsing, perhaps, a production of "commoning" practices in scholarship. In general, this means creating prompts or tasks or scores for ourselves together at meetings, working on those, and then meeting again to devise the next steps. The meetings are always one hour, even as the timeline of the project itself is indeterminate. This framing and shared staging lets the group drive the project, its pace, and its content. Our instructions to ourselves and the next steps are arrived at through collaborative discussion and deliberation—this kind of decision-making improves morale, productivity, and creativity. Everyone who shows up has a voice or, in the case of a shared online document, everyone has an active cursor and keyboard. Nonetheless, power dynamics that are historically embedded in bodies still unfold. The project develops or doesn't as the people working on it move it forward in the ways that they can.

If not productive of possibilities (towards thinking and enacting progressive change), what is the use of theory, and of our writing?

What place do poetic and playful responses have in this text? Why the emphasis on theory so far? Would we dare create a work with more than one column of text, with multiple voices speaking at once, with multiple endings?

For me, the first section of the text - *Mourning* - represents the most refined one in regards to its use of theoretical argument; unfortunately, though, I also perceive it as very hermetic and speaking very much in a 'singular' voice. Understanding our project as the search for a place from where we can speak while not recreating/reanimating the *single/singular* author, I very much would appreciate indeed a break of rhythm and style; a playfulness that - while not necessarily trying to represent different (16?) voices simultaneously - would indicate the fundamental dialogical - rhizomatic? - structure of thinking and writing, that takes place. Yes - using more than one column when needed, as to indicate us speaking 'at once', but also questions and comments *in/as* text: to indicate where thoughts break, come to a halt, provoke reactions and affect each other as a collective of different voices.

What is our order of 'thought' if we can still speak of an 'order' (perhaps concatenation is better)? Which constatation leads to what thoughts and what claims and calls?

We could begin from experiences: in life, in theatres, in theory, in institutions. Experiences that relate to ends.

How do we define the end?

Is this book meant to be that active sense of collaborative mourning? How? What are we mourning?

We put forward mourning as a praxis that requires an active participation and through its process enacts the ends of particular relationships. We must mourn the individualized self - in the field, in the institution - in order to build different relationalities and leave the old ones behind. This is essential to the field in the ways that it opens up different hierarchies and networks, decolonizing and awakening to a more distributed model of knowing.

Writing this book as the COVID-19 pandemic crystalizes precariousness both unevenly and everywhere, we argue that it is not only expertise that is needed, but engagement: with each other and with the worlds around us and between us. While there are communities, even sustained communities in theater, performance, and the humanities more broadly, we look to build a community based on shared collaborative knowledge, that moves disciplines towards ethical epistemologies and incomplete or asymmetrical knowledge making.[23] Thinking in ecological terms, the collaborative process that we are engaging provides an opportunity to actually practice distributed knowledge, and diffractive cause and effect that might enact an end to the concept of individual, original potency.

---

23 Steve Rayner introduced the concept of "Uncomfortable Knowledge" in the field of science and society and Donald Rumsfeld famously opined on the problems of decision-making in the face of "known knowns," "known unknowns," and "unknown unknowns." To those three categories Rayner added a fourth, "unknown knowns." See Steve Rayner, "Uncomfortable Knowledge: The Social Construction of Ignorance in Science and Environmental Policy Discourses," *Economy and Society* 41 (2012): 107–25.

Within our writing, as in our own ideas, there are disagreements, mismatched priorities, opposing conclusions and widely different perspectives. The process is generative and degenerative. The experience points out the value of contextualized knowledge, of developing thoughts and frames, and of messy and caring collaborative processes. And further, this activity allows the opportunity to see our own words change and develop new meanings through their interaction with others.

At various points in writing and editing this book, members of our group have noted the delight in finding snippets and fragments of their writing incorporated into different sections by someone else who recognized an echo between ideas and found new applications for the text. The ideas, once shared on the document, become untethered from the person who penned them, like new objects with agency unto themselves. It is actually impossible to trace a straight line of development, and no one knows which thought sparked the next. But each act of participation, each offering, contributes to the growth of the whole teeming and rippling mass. The individual self and its intentions become subsumed within the larger collaboration. And yet, the individual's responsiveness to the material, listening and responding to the process and relation we are embedded within, remains essen-

tial to the ongoing work. A paragraph or a sentence, or a fragment, or sometimes a word takes on a new scale as multiple other authors pick it up and rework it, setting it among other ideas from other parts of the shared document. Interestingly, we are not sure who initially shared this reflection.

The process then, of one part affecting the whole, of contributing and creating but being without complete control, reminds us that we are amidst all these overwhelming and catastrophic events that force us to confront the performance of scale: personal, collective, intercultural, international, global, planetary. In writing, we thus do not pretend to form a homogenous group that could be properly subsumed under one signifier: we cannot name, express, and reflect all the different realities, experiences, and reflections we necessarily made as situated individuals. Nor can we, and nor do we want to, fall back into a mere accumulation of singular voices just stacked together by formal, institutional, and academic necessities. Indeed, we have actively rejected the model of the edited volume that collects individual texts and brings together a number of authors around a common theme.

MOURNING, UNBOUNDED

We approach our ends together, here, with mourning.[24] Mourning is a beginning and an action, a shared performance, rather than a thematic. "The pain of mourning intimately interpenetrates every emotional and somatic fiber amplifying its wounding effects across the body"—this sentence, written by one of us in one of our shared documents from the rural vastness of one continent, resonates deeply, in the body, with someone across the Atlantic Ocean. This person responds in our shared document: "The vibrations produced by the impact of these words remind me that I am (still) mourning, that my body is (still) wounded, and that perhaps there is no end to it. At the same time, I am reminded that only through

---

24 Others are working along similar thematics, mourning amidst our place in this time of ends but in more traditional modes that center the singular voice and reassert individuation. See for instance: Cindy Milstein, ed., *Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief* (ak Press, 2021); Guy Cools, *Performing Mourning: Laments in Contemporary Art* (Valiz, 2021); Sarah Julius, *Re-performance, Mourning and Death: Specters of the Past* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); and the 2003 study by Darian Leader, *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia, and Depression* (Graywolf Press, 2008).

connection (it happens each time I read it) can I sense something impossible: the unboundedness of my body." As if shared pain—the shared experience of mourning—could provide the means to live with finitude. As if reading this together when we meet—for some of us in the morning, for some between meetings after lunch, for others just before sleep, or others still long past our usual bedtime—as if this could span those distances and align our temporalities. As if the exchange of our experiences of loss could replace void spaces with a renewed sense of belonging, and a pathway towards interconnectedness. As if we could mourn.

We know the deeply intense and embodied experience of mourning enacts ongoing relocations of and transformations in subjectivity. The decentering of our individual, particular "I" towards a shared "we" has been a journey of attempting to find continuity in belonging—of overcoming loss by trying to reach out for other possibilities of enduring the ephemerality of being. It is a painful opening up to others. For it is through our connections, both welcome and unwelcome, that we perceive our generative potential of becoming. The condition of mourning encompasses multiple places and temporalities; it is an improvised, ongoing dance of possible ends—a practice of interconnectedness. Because in mourning, we perform

If you have the bandwidth, please also continue to "rescue" text from below the line by copying and pasting it above the line. This is an invitation to read and reread and to pull those sections that speak to you or feel important.

Consider highlighting the text you moved so we are not re-copying work again and again.

survival by standing alongside other positions of vulnerability, and affirming our becoming(s) together. This planetary dimension of responsibility and care is both a mode of thought and everyday practice.

Here, we embrace the practice of *collective mourning* as we propose to change the ways we relate to performance, nature, finitude, and each other. Adapting the way we work and interact is part of a larger transformation that implies a redefinition of performance. In writing this book together we try to collaboratively mourn performance. By grieving together we seek to stay with the ends.[25] This is per-haps to say, we look to theater and performance, not as some affluent utopian site, but rather a possible practice towards following through with the collective promises that it cannot currently deliver.

Our collective work here opens questions concern-ing the scale of performance in the face of ecological and existential crises and reflects upon institutions

---

25 See Yasmin Zacaria Mikhaiel, "Grief as Rebellion," *Dramaturgs' Network*, https://www.dramaturgy.co.uk/single-post/invisible-diaries-yasmin-zacaria-mikhaiel-grief-as-rebellion, and Cindy Milstein, "In the Era of COVID-19, Collective Grief Is Rebellion," interview by Kelly Hayes, *Movement Memos, Truthout,* May 27, 2020, audio, 41:10, https://truthout.org/audio/in-the-era-of-covid-19-collective-grief-is-rebellion/.

and collectives as ruined nests of performance studies that might embody and demand new languages and methodologies. Is there an "in between" position where performance, and writing and thinking about performance, can be deinstitutionalized? In this shared writing we look to relocate and reposition performance and its study, to de-institutionalize and de-individualize. As the Berlin-based performance collective She She Pop declares: "We are some of you. We stand before you and, we are the protagonist, well, I am the protagonist—there I am! I want to speak. I want to speak for everybody, I speak for myself and I report on the behalf of others."[26] In writing collectively, in sharing authorship and ideas, we are rehearsing a way of working and thinking. It is a performance that asks us to face the scale and magnitude of the ends. Performance studies as a field and practice has not balked at anything short of the most radical of possibilities.

If the experience of life becomes meaningful through a balanced relation between "finite and

---

26 She She Pop, "Oratorium: Kollektive Andacht zu einem wohlgehüteten Geheimnis," *She She Pop Produktionen,* https://sheshepop.de/oratorium.

infinite being,"[27] dealing with ends can bring some form of closure to the endless openness of the infinitely repeating present, a point of reference, a threshold introduced on the slick surface of capitalist overstimulation. Performance particularly seems an apt medium to seek this threshold again, not just producing affects and letting them flow, but each time sewing an affect back into an expanding whole.

So, we are here to confront the ends collectively.

And we assume we are not alone in these ends.

Writing together creates a shared affinity, which does not place the emphasis on the final product, but on a shared fondness, an orientation to bring something to an end.[28] This book then, is both a performance of process and an argument for such processes. To continue writing and thinking, trying to study, alone—upholding myths of singular and solitary

---

27 François Bonnet, *Après la mort: Essai sur l'envers du présent* (éditions de l'éclat, 2017), 10.

28 Dramaturge Bojana Cvejić considers affinity as that which binds dramaturgs and artists in a creative process: it does not mean a product-oriented, functional approach, but rather a shared concern, that nevertheless allows for some constraint to make a concrete collaboration manifest itself. Bojana Cvejić, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," *Maska* 16, nos. 131–32, (2010): 40–53.

brilliance—is to repeat the mistakes that have led us to the ends. Perhaps we are studying in the sense of study as co-authors Fred Moten and Stefano Harney explain, as a process of building collectivity, wherein,

> study is what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice. The notion of a rehearsal—being in a kind of workshop, playing in a band, in a jam session, or old men sitting on a porch, or people working together in a factory—are these various modes of activity. The point of calling it "study" is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present. These activities aren't ennobled by the fact that we now say, "oh, if you did these things in a certain way, you could be said to have been studying." To do these things is to be involved in a kind of common intellectual practice. What's important is to recognize that that has been the case—because that recognition allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought.[29]

---

29 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013), 110.

As authors of this work, we share a lot, but we don't all agree that we live in "end-times." We don't all agree that eschatological thinking serves as a productive way to perceive and to conceptualize "contemporaneity." Some of us are skeptical of attempts to localize where and when "we" stand, or to even define the "we" of this collective endeavor. We continue to write through these differences and ideas. We work under the condition that "contemporaneity" designates a concept that is "made present," as philosopher Juliane Rebentisch writes, "in its geographic, cultural, and historical specificity."[30] We would like to invert the reading of "end times," as it often is associated with the context of an "Anthropocene eschatology,"[31] which, as Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste

30 Juliane Rebentisch, "The Contemporaneity of Contemporary Art," *New German Critique* 42, no. 1 (2015): 236.

31 Michael Northcott, "Eschatology in the Anthropocene: From the Chronos of Deep Time to the Kairos of the Age of Humans," in *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch,* eds. Clive Hamilton, Christopher Bonneuil, and François Gemenne (Routledge, 2015), 100–111.

Fressoz argue, represents but a proliferation of the universalist paradigm of western modernism.[32]

Ends draw us into a reflection on and critique of the singular and it is exactly in the moment of the contraction and focus on the particular that the universal arises. We take up theories of mourning, ecology, and institutional critique to think through and with performances around the planet and with each other. While not serving as a universalist fable, "ends" can, as we would like to argue, relate towards the universal through its negativity,[33] not by claiming, but by criti-

---

32 Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History, and Us* (Verso, 2016).

33 This is close to the argument of Chakrabarty of the anthropocene/climate crisis as negative universal, which resists notions of a positivist view of history tending towards progress, instead highlighting uneven and local development. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009): 222. However, Chakrabarty has been criticized for that by Malcom Ferdinand, in *Une écologie décoloniale: Penser l'écologie depuis le monde caribéen* (Éditions du Seuil, 2019), as if he could not continue his decolonial agenda when it comes to ecology and had to resort back to universality. However, we take the negative universal as a background that brings the situated to the fore and as an incentive to find relations between those situations.

cally asking about the collective and its collaborative ethos. Instead of representing a singular thread of thought and being that tries to encompass a totality of beings as in the notion of "the end of the world," the notion of the "ends" here points towards the opposite: the place of the particular, the singular being. "Ends" activate the thinking of "one's ends," and the "ends of one's world." It is precisely the confrontation with one's finitude that opens up a perspective on commoning and on a collective mode of being.

ANOTHER END OR ENDURING ENDS

There is good reason to believe that COVID-19, what many of us have experienced as a great rupture, will not just cease. The interruption of the extended lockdowns has taken too long, but this length upholds and prolongs the pressing, lingering quality of the time, and as philosopher Armen Avanessian suggests, the crucial argument is not that the recent outbreaks of the coronavirus will last indefinitely but that there will always be another pandemic coming, overlapping with our current state.[34] COVID-19 is, after all, not a

34 Literaturforum im Brecht-Haus, "Postpandemisches Theater: Die Krise der Versammlung," *YouTube,* November 11, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wY0gKOSlU6I.

In the last year, nearly three billion animals were killed or displaced in the Australian fires. In 2008, six hundred thousand domesticated livestock and companion animals perished in the Iowa floods in the United States. An estimated 5,500 dogs are killed in animal shelters in the United States every day. One single 10,000 head hog finishing operation (in pork production) averages a pre-market 2% mortality rate, resulting in 14 tons of animal carcasses every year. As of November 19, the World Health Organisation has recorded 1.34 million humans that have died from COVID-19. Mourning can occur in differential culturally specific practices, including personal approaches such as lighting candles, visiting gravesites, and keeping a shrine. Mourning is also an attitude, a particular attunement in proximity of death (and life) and within conditions of living and dying. In The Work of Mourning (2001), Jacques Derrida argues that mourning begins well before the actual death of the other at the inception of one's relation with them. Further, Derrida deems that the world is "an artificial effect, a cobbled-together verbal and terminological construction, destined to mask our panic that there is not the world, that there is nothing less certain than the world itself". (2009: 265-266, 366)

Nilüfer Gros
Nov 11, 2020

update needed

"natural catastrophe" but, as most findings show, the effect of human and non-human relationality gone bad, or feral, as Anna L. Tsing and the creators of *The Feral Atlas* name those activities that "emerge within human-sponsored projects but are not in human control."[35] The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the precarity of human lives that are dependent on mismanaged and insufficient healthcare systems, politicians in denial, and careless ecological relations. It also is a brutal reminder of the fragility of democratic norms, and the inept functioning of civil societies and institutional procedures. A complicated zone opens and is embraced through mourning, through affirming ends.

To think the ongoingness of ends affirmatively is to shift one's perspective away from "healthy thinking," an optimism emphasizing and chasing youth, life, and progress, while avoiding death or a dying world.[36] What to call a way of thinking that takes into account death, dimness, nothingness, and the void? Thinking the end is not the end of thinking; that is what Romanian artists Alina Popa and Florin Flueras conceptual-

---

35 Anna L. Tsing et al., *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene* (Stanford University Press 2020).

36 Alina Popa and Florin Flueras, *Unsorcery* (Punch, 2018), 154–55.

ize with their term: "Dead Thinking," a kind of thought that "could appear, in the twilight of reason where the hopes end, and the remaining options are rather dark, negative or dead."[37] Instead of an old or new kind of rationalism, dead thinking dwells precisely in the void where affects and unknowns roam and the "I" is negated, and where representation becomes inoperative. Perhaps in this we can find a methodology for artists and humanists to study together.

In the midst of a long second lockdown of the pandemic, something special happened. Numbed by the suspension of life caused by the pandemic and its consequences, one of us took the train and went to see a live performance, with living dancers, in a theater venue in Bruges, Belgium. It was the avant-premiere of a dance piece choreographed by Michiel Vandevelde called *Dances of Death.*[38] With only five people in attendance, the audience sat around a circular stage area, where dancers were painting each other's bodies as people entered the space. Performers turned their bodies into colorful skeletons, a careful preparation for what could be nothing else but a contemporary *dance macabre,* a dance of

37 ibid., 159.
38 Michiel Vandevelde, "Dances of Death," *Kaaitheater,* Brussels, June 12, 2021.

death. In what followed, the dancers engaged in a ritual of various dances, ranging from folk dance to more spiritually rooted movements, to an all out rave party, guided by a sound score composed of different songs of sorrow and death, again ranging from Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas,* to Eliane Radigue's *Trilogie de la mort,* to Morton Feldman and techno music you would dance to while raging against the dying light in a discotheque. The buildup moved towards a sort of climax—which cannot be described otherwise than as a negative climax that combines despair with joyful intensity—after which the group fell apart and each dancer, now donned with refined, colorful masks on the backs of their heads, took the center of the circular stage, only illuminated by a small flashlight torch. A final struggle, a last dance—not with sorrow, but with a particular conviction, something dignified, the ultimate, playful dance while moving to the other side, toward death.

The rest of us read about these performances on a shared online document and then discussed it at a meeting over video conference—some marveled that a performance had happened amidst a lockdown and, indeed, that one of us actually went. To many of us at the time, in many parts of the world, attending a performance seemed dangerous or out of sync with our own daily lives. *Dances of Death* and the experi-

ence of attending it, then sharing with co-authors and collaborators, sparked reactions written with an unusual combination of sorrow, even morbidity, and an energy and intensity that was far from defeatist or without potentiality. Both the performance and our writing about it are instances of what Patricia MacCormack has described as "secular ecstasy[,...a] painful joy" of the end as "a creative experience."[39] It is something like waking up in the dark, being brought out of a state of anesthesia—for Bonnet, another factor leading to the hyperpresent's decoupling of finite and infinite being.[40] This level of death, of ends as an individual experience and as a conceptual aspect of life and existence, can bring us deeper into a secular ritual, a performative state of undoing, while fusing "finite being" back onto "infinite being," gesturing towards a sustained state of mourning and ending.

This performance, witnessed when so much theater was closed, not only referred explicitly through song to the Greek dance of Zalongos, *Dances of Death* even has a similar dramaturgy, relating to death and ends in the same way on different levels. The legend of the dance of Zalongos describes a dance performed

39 Patricia MacCormack, *The Ahuman Manifesto: Activism for the End of the Anthropocene* (Bloomsbury, 2020), 9, 10.
40 Bonnet, *Après la mort,* 14–16.

by a group of about sixty women and their children from northwestern Greece, who upon being besieged by Ottoman forces during the war in 1803, decided to throw themselves off the cliffs. The story goes that they did so after and while dancing this last dance. In discussing this, one of us, originally from the region, alerts us to the controversial historicity of the Souliot people's dance of Zalongos with respect to the current rise of nationalism in Greece, and the risks of roman-ticizing the actual historical incident by describing it as a "dance performance." As Irene Loutzaki argues, "the stage versions were an opportunity to expand the methods of teaching historical facts and making them more accessible to a broader audience. Thus, we can see how theatricality was the key ingredient in the state's manipulation of spectators for nationalistic purposes."[41] Dances of death, like the ends, are contextual and need to be contextualized.

Many of us working here on these pages encounter these dances of death and their historicity for the first time. We write along with those authors who have witnessed them, studied them closely, and previously

---

41 Irene Loutzaki, "The Dance of Zalongos: An Invented Tradition on Canvas," in *Imaging Dance: Visual Representations of Dancers and Dancing,* eds. Barbara Sparti and Judy Van Zile (Georg Olms Verlag, 2011), 16.

performative state of darkness, while fusion finite being back onto infinite being, gesturing towards a sustained state of mourning and ending. It can be the jolt, perhaps akin to what Foucault already described in The Order of Things, when he wrote that: *It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance. For this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think.* (2005 [1966], 373).[1]

The legend of the dance of Zalongo was a dance performed by a group of about 60 women from northwestern Greece and their children, who upon being sieged by Ottoman forces during the war in 1803, decided to throw themselves off the cliffs. The story has it that they did so after and while dancing this last dance. The dance of Zalongo and the dances of death have a similar dramaturgy, on different levels they relate to death, ends and darkness in the same way. The concrete historical situation of war, or the individual end in the form of death, or an ending world view (such as anthropocentrism, individualism, or growth oriented meritocracy, or more historically, the end of a culture due to colonization), or the extinction of many species due to humans' destruction of the planet, which also jeopardizes our own presence on this planet,... these are but a couple of ends that are summoned in *Dances of death* and that are approached affirmatively.

Socrates: a ritual leading to virtues in the face of death (E3) (academic, passive) (argument/analytic)

The reference to the dance of Zalongo reminds of how poet and philosopher Jan Zwicky recounts the final hours of Socrates in her essay in the little but brilliant book *Learning to Die. Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis*. Zwicky takes the attitude of Socrates in the time before his death as a model for how to exist in the face of the end - again be it immediate or

[1] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005
[2] Danowski and Viveiros De Castro argue that when it comes to ends of the world, the levels of individual endings and collective endings are intertwined, talking about the one, implies talking about the other.

Sozita Goudouna
Mar 18, 2021

the dance has been contested as historically incorrect. Most contemporary sources don't refer to the dance. Indeed they probably suicided to save themselves from certain death.
Show more

Sozita Goudouna
Mar 19, 2021

Perhaps if we use the word legend instead of story the problem will be resolved

Sozita Goudouna
Mar 24, 2021

On the 25th March 2021 Greece celebrated 200 years of Independence with a video of the US Army performing in Greek the Zalongo dance:
Show more

argued over them. Our shared engagement and work open us to ritual performances, the concrete historical situation of war, and the individual end in the form of death. We consider worldviews of the ends, such as anthropocentrism, individualism, growth-oriented meritocracy, the end of a culture due to colonization, and the extinction of many species due to humans' destruction of the planet, which also jeopardizes our own presence on this planet. All of these ends are summoned and are approached affirmatively together, in meetings and through text, and open space where it is possible to dwell with the ends.

Such dwelling together, draws us to the realization that the dance of Zalongos is reminiscent of how poet and philosopher Jan Zwicky recounts the final hours of Socrates in her essay in the brilliant book *Learning to Die: Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis.* Zwicky takes the attitude of Socrates in the time before his death as a model for how to exist in the face of the end—be it immediate or long term. A number of virtues are put to the fore, and they are worth repeating here: "knowing what's what: awareness coupled with humility regarding what one knows, courage, self-control, justice, contemplative practice, compassion."[42] These

42 Jan Zwicky, "A Ship from Delos," in Robert Bringhurst and Jan Zwicky, *Learning to Die: Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis*

might seem values far off from the dances discussed so far. However, on the one hand, there is the gesture of producing beauty and engaging in what Byung-Chul Han would call "strong play," a ritual practice where life is at stake, one leading to a profound sense of community.[43] On the other hand, on the level of the performance, it is again the intensity with which these dances are performed in Vandevelde's contemporary take on them that communicate something very different than despair. They convey the desire to dance, to come together in the face of the end, and to give shape to a situation that intellectually may lead to despair, but on a collective level might lead to the Socratic values of humility, awareness, courage, compassion, justice, and self-control. Moreover, it can invite the audience or the reader to do so as well. "To be aware that death is imminent is not to wallow in despair";[44] it could lead to humility and courage via this ritual of performance. Not a ritual that brings us to a sacred space, not a ritual that synchronizes us with the latest update of technology and consumerism or of surveillance, but a ritual that grounds us in the

(University of Regina Press, 2018), 49.

43 Byung-Chul Han, *The Disappearance of Rituals: A Topology of the Present,* trans. Daniel Steuer (Polity Press, 2020), 47–48.

44 Zwicky, "A Ship from Delos," 51.

dark, together. It brings us not beyond a threshold, but precisely situates us *on* the threshold, on the brink towards the end. It is not transitional, but rather places us in the limbo state of being we are in, both in our own, individual lives on their ways to death, and as cultures, as species, as world.

What characterizes the dances of death, the story of Socrates, and the story of this book is a perspective of affirmative ends as social, collective events. They all search for ways to learn to dead-think and to experience affirmation not merely as joyful positivity (yes to life!) but also as the negative affirmation of death, of ends. Affirmation not as a positive identity construction, but affirmation as a way of preferring not to, as our friend Bartleby the Scrivener would have it. Affirmation not as something that produces, adds, or accumulates, towards appropriable subject positions and groups, but rather as something that highlights the inappropriable, the unknown aspects that are also quite intimate. "The fear of human extinction is a necessary part of empathy that dismantles human privilege."[45] Let us not just deny or consume these ends that surround us, but stay with them and use them, without exhausting them, in searching for a shift in the way of being in the world. Both Bonnet and Han

---

45 MacCormack, *The Ahuman Manifesto,* 16.

refer to sacrifice and rituals as situations in which the infinite, collective, and impersonal poles of life are fostered and experienced. They are antidotes, putting weight in the scale opposite to that of narcissism and digitized destruction of the social[46] and to that of amnesic, hyperpresent repetition.[47]

Different relationships to and a general lack of understanding about the multiple ends of the world further inhibits the global effort necessary to address endings in the future. Among our group, we have worked to build a more mindful awareness of our different relationships to ends, but a shared wish for hope in the face of hopelessness emerged as a common motivator. One of us offered this specific example of Rojava, also known as the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES). Rojava gained its de facto autonomy in 2012 in the midst of the Syrian war, and has been saved from the hands of ISIS, fought for by women and men taking part in regional Kurdish forces. A place of hope for the diaspora of people with origins from there and for so many activists of human rights, feminists, and ecologists from the international community, it has put in practice universal democratic, sustainable,

46 Han, *The Disappearance of Rituals,* 12–13.
47 Bonnet, *Après la mort,* 25.

autonomous pluralist, and feminist policies with the participation of women at all levels of its decentralized multiethnic and multilingual governing. Rojava is the fruit of this geography's stratified memories of conflicts, a longstanding patriarchal social system, oppression, and rebellion. In the last couple of centuries, the region lived through multiple ends, witnessing: the end of the Ottoman Empire, the oppression of its non-Muslim minorities, the Armenian Genocide, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the construction of the Turkish-Syrian and Iraqi borders ignoring the diversity of cultures inhabiting the region for centuries, Kurdish revolts and their repression, multiple massacres, the formation of the Kurdish liberation movement, and the horrors of ISIS. It is from this memory of ends, of hopelessness, that Rojava is born. It is the repeated experience of devastation and revolt that turns the knowledge of the end to new life. Hopelessness to hope.

That the ends are encroaching at various scales presents the problem of hopelessness itself. Slavoj Žižek notes, "During the protests that erupted in Chile in October 2019, a piece of graffiti was drawn on the walls that read: 'Another end of the world is

possible.'"[48] The old mantra of "Another World is Possible!" is less utopic today than the possibility of another end of the world. Or as John Halstead puts it: "Ok, so the world is ending. What do we do now? How do we live meaningfully in light of this awareness? What suffering might we be able to alleviate? What beauty might we be able to cultivate?"[49] Or, as Pablo Servigne, Raphaël Stevens, and Gauthier Chapelle encourage us, it is not enough to just survive through the ends, but it is necessary to imagine other possible ends.[50] Perhaps we should begin our search for these other ends, which in the form of death is too often understood as an individual, not collective, experience. The enduring place of this search in the philosophical canon is often considered both as a driving force of thought and a profound threat to it.[51]

48 Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! 2: Chronicles of a Time Lost* (Polity Press, 2021), 68.

49 John Halstead, "What Is Post-Doom?," *Another End of the World Is Possible,* https://anotherendoftheworld.org/what-is-post-doom/.

50 Pablo Servigne, Raphaël Stevens, and Gauthier Chapelle, *Another End of the World Is Possible: Living the Collapse (and Not Merely Surviving It),* trans. Geoffrey Samuel (Polity Press, 2021).

51 Marc Crépon, *Vivre avec: La pensée de la mort et la mémoire des guerres* (Hermann, 2008), and Jan Mieszkowski, "Beyond the

What are the steps and actions to be taken, when performing the end every day, over and over again? Gilles Deleuze's essay "The Exhausted," on Beckett's late plays, addresses how the exhaustion of all options opened up the possibility of doing whatever, of performance in spite of, performance after the end, without end, endless.[52] Saying something, doing an action, when all is over, when nothing is to be expected besides further waiting, is such a difficult gesture. In the second act of *Waiting for Godot,* which could be the first, or the n-th act as well, Didi and Gogo play to keep themselves busy. It is these little acts that still happen, after the possibility of any story, any narrative, that could give meaning to their existence and the activity of waiting, that are at once sad and comic performances bound by and beyond any representation.

And it is not just fictional characters thinking and performing in these ways as these gestures are reminiscent of how Russian avant-garde author Daniil Kharms, under surveillance by secret services and censored, poor, and hungry, continued looking to cause an "incident" or "wonder," performing jokes and tricks

Death Principle," *Cultural Critique* 93 (2016): 151–67.
52 Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted," trans. Anthony Uhlmann, *SubStance* 24, no. 3 (1995): 3–28.

SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS

(please read the text and answer below)

What topics are recurrent throughout the texts? What themes?

What convergences are there? Subthemes?

What kinds of 'tones' do we* have?

Where are there frictions?

What disagreements do we* have?

What potential juxtapositions are there?

to disturb and break open reality, to cause something to happen amidst all of the nothingness. By exploring the implications of foregrounding not life but death, not beginnings but ends, not positive but negative "becomings," we attempt to foreground a position of performance or a perspective on performance in a performance and study of "ending." We thus return to our shared discipline in order to question how dead-thinking, affirming the ends, and dancing and playing through the ends might shape our practices of mourning, writing, commoning, and performance.

I

Performance Ends:
To Do and to Mourn Performance

Performance and concepts of performativity have become crucial modes of thinking across fields in considering how bodies, subjects, objects, and environments are constituted, experienced, and remembered. Since performance is a site in which identities and relationships are created, performance theory should also provide a means to think through the particular relationships we call for here: ends and collectivity. But before we address various instances of the nexus of performance, ends, and collectivity, we, as performance studies scholars and practitioners, need to look at the basic concept of performance and see where it might need some adjustments.

A performative act, in the Austinian sense, avoids endings: it is constitutive, generative even when it causes destruction. With the neoliberal and tech industry's obsession with and enforcement of performance as the "success" of the activity, the positivity of the performative has turned awry. The pervasive and forced happiness of performance leaves little space for negativity, for inaction, for unproductivity, and specifically for our interest here in this book: for ends. The situatedness of Austin's performative action unveils notions of the social, political, and cultural prerequisites of what counts as "performance"—making performance a tool that not only "creates" new realities, but also affirms social norms and power structures.[1] Understanding performance through a paradigm of efficacy (as having measurable visible effects) remains dominant, politically potent, and the subject of much debate. It is important to notice that the unmarked subject of the performative utterance—"the human agent"—has undoubtedly left

---

1   For more critique on the nature of the speech act's prerequisites and animating structures, see Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press, 1978).

its performative imprints.[2] What Jon McKenzie coins as "techno-performance"[3] can be considered the foundation of performance's technological and global ontological power: A paradigm of technological research and global expansion of computing power that originated in the frame of the Cold War's space-race and is central to the development of humankind's devastating imprint on planet Earth.

Critical of this productive, capitalist mode of performance, many performance scholars and artists have turned towards an ontology of performance as ephemeral. Performance happens in the present and leaves only memories, feelings, traces—like a loved one who has passed or a broken relationship. As Peggy Phelan asserts, "live performance and theater ('art with real bodies') persist despite an economy of reproduction [...] respond[ing] to a psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death."[4] The theorist prioritizes liveness and the ephemerality of

---

2   See also Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Routledge, 1993).

3   Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (Routledge, 2001), 101.

4   Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (Routledge, 1997), 3.

performance as an argument towards its resistance to commodification and systems of capital.[5]

The ephemerality of performance can be enticing, yet its emphasis on immateriality and temporality precisely brings it close to those values that are central to post-Fordist modes of labor. Phelan and McKenzie's arguments meet each other when we can consider the same performative phenomenon both from a position of capitalist extraction and of ungraspable resistance. Therefore, it seems that we are situated between a performative ephemerality that is close to post-Fordist and high speed consumer capitalism—with artistic performance almost becoming paradigmatic for

---

5   Certain performance scholars have resisted theorizations of the ontology of performance as structured upon ephemerality or disappearance and the centrality of the live human performer, and have proposed alternative perspectives. See, for example, Aleksandra Wolska, "Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance," *Theatre Journal* 57, no. 1 (2005): 83–95; Philip Auslander, "Live from Cyberspace, or, I was sitting at my computer this guy appeared he thought I was a bot," in *Critical Theory and Performance,* eds. Janelle Rienelt and Joseph Roach (University of Michigan Press, 2007); and Malin Palani, "Performance with Others" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2015).

this[6]—and a temporal art form, one whose finitude we might learn from again, in order to engage in the myriad ends that surround, imply, and entangle us.

The temptation of ontologically ephemeral performance, however, has led all too often to a celebration of absence, a fetishization of loss, that actually thwarts the development of performance as a kind of unproductive potentiality—one that we sense is necessary to understand being with ends—be it in artistic practice, in searching for a worldview that is relevant to a time of extinction, in scholarly work, or on an institutional level. Performance can do more than capture us in a double-bind of productivity and disappearance. Others have already initiated similar approaches to performance that resists notions of universal progress or a singular definition in favor of situated, unique, and uneven manifestations, such as Hans-Thies Lehmann's *afformance*, an action that does "less" and merely approaches performance without doing,[7] and Carl Lavery's "weak performance"

---

6   See Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work: Proximity of Art and Capitalism* (Zer0 Books, 2015) for a more concrete analysis of how the arts field functions as an emblematically neoliberal and post-Fordist system.

7   Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre,* trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (Routledge, 2006), 179–80.

Eero Laine a répondu à un commentaire dans le document suivant

▤ PSI ENDS_ COLLABORATIVE BOOK PROJECT FORERUNNERS

This praxis, for us, is performance - the processual unfolding of worlds between the individual and a collectivity that is always to come.

Juliana Moraes

Do we all agree with this definition of performance?
"Performance is the processual unfolding of worlds between the individual and a collectivity that is always to come." -- I am not sure I agree with that.
Maybe something more humble, like: "The processual unfolding of worlds between the individual and a collectivity that is always to come might be understood as a type of performative engagement."

Nilüfer Gros

Indeed...

Malin Palani

If we're going to define performance, I agree, I think that we should think more humbly and more complexly about the definition. Is this an attempt to reclaim performance from other disciplines and institutions? Is this meant to be a definition of performance within performance studies or more broadly? I'd like to either have a discussion about this definition and/or unpack it in the text. There's a lot weighted words here: individual, world, performative...

Malin Palani

and praxis too.

84

which is a perhaps more humble performativity giving place to negativity in the wake of the ecological crisis.[8] To heed the warning we hear in our worlds, we want to rediscover another notion central to performance studies from this temptation of ephemerality and the problematic exertion of power via performance, namely: mourning.

THE PERFORMANCE OF MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA

Too much emphasis on the ephemerality of performance may result in a stagnation into melancholia. In Freudian psychoanalysis, mourning engages with the other, while melancholia involves engaging with oneself narcissistically (i.e., with narcissistic investment into the lost object).[9] The melancholic subject

8   Carl Lavery, "Introduction: Performance and Ecology: What Can Theatre Do?," *Green Letters* 20, no. 3 (2016): 230.

9   Judith Butler argues that Sigmund Freud changed his mind on the issue of when one has fully mourned another human being. He suggested that "successful mourning meant being able to exchange an object for another; while he later claimed that incorporation, originally associated with melancholia, was essential to the task of mourning. And if the opposition to this thesis were not consequential, there would be no political reason for reimagining the possibility of community on the

thus elevates the object of their longing to an idealized position; however, since any object is subject to decay, one can possess it unconditionally only insofar as it is lost, in its loss. Therefore, melancholia is not simply the attachment to the lost object but the attachment to the very original gesture of its loss. In the process of loss, there is always a remainder that cannot be integrated through the work of mourning, and the ultimate fidelity is the fidelity to this remainder. In short, what melancholia obfuscates is that the object is lacking from the very beginning, that its emergence coincides with its lack, that this object is nothing but the libidinal investment in a purely anamorphic entity that does not exist in itself. The paradox, of course, is that this deceitful translation of lack into loss enables one to assert possession of the object; what is never possessed can also never be lost, so the melancholic, in their unconditional fixation on the lost object, in a way possesses it in its very loss.[10]

Melancholia is not only the failure of the work of mourning, the persistence of the attachment to an ideal object that was never real, but also mourning's

basis of vulnerability and loss." Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (Verso, 2020), 19–20.

10 Slavoj Žižek, "Melancholy and the Act," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000): 658.

very opposite. The melancholic refusal to accomplish the work of mourning takes a form that sits opposed to mourning, a spectacle of the excessive, superfluous sorrow for an object even before this object is lost. The anxiety over ephemerality, the notion that performance is in an ontological state of disappearance, may seem to mirror the ends we face today when rendering the neoliberal notion of progress and production meaningless. Yet what we, as performance scholars and artists, might find meaning in, perhaps, is the ephemeral witnessing through bodies that insists on being transmitted. Performance is remembered into the future.

This notion of collective mourning provides an alternative perspective on performance that "does" without producing "liveness" or a live experience and that then ends without disappearing completely. Thus, a liminal space is formulated that is characterized by an affirmation of ends. Perhaps, a detour via anthropology or ritual of mourning in relation to the dead can be useful here. In *Au bonheur des morts,*[11] Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret argues against a results-oriented vision of mourning as a phase one has to go through in order to let go of the deceased,

11   Vinciane Despret, *Au bonheur des morts: Récit de ceux qui restent* (La Découverte, 2015).

87

to position them firmly in the closed off realm of the dead, and to focus on "life" and move on again. Many stories, actions, gestures, prove that *faire son deuil* ("to do one's mourning" as it is so nicely phrased in French and translated by the French speakers in our group) is a long-term process, one that makes us perform little actions, gestures that keep the dead with us, among the living; intentionality originates from the ambiguous zone between life and death. This type of mourning goes against a mourning that one has to perform quick-quick (or else...). It is also not melancholic, as it does not entrap the person living *with* the dead in a deadlock or rejection of life, either. It is a mourning that opens up multiple truths; knowing that the person is dead, but still setting that extra plate, still talking to that empty chair. It actually seems to require the same flexibility the spectator has while experiencing a performance, at the same time acknowledging the "truth of the performance" and its afterlife once the performance ends—we must hold the performance, knowing we cannot bring it back.

We experience this sitting in an auditorium as we experience it thinking and writing among others in writing this text. This book is an attempt to hold our connections and our shared thoughts, knowing this moment will pass and will not come back. These words are the traces of a process of collaboration,

they are not the collaboration itself. Shared authorship resonates with Despret's way of inquiry into the dead: *Au Bonheur des Morts* is guided by a narrative of a deceased cousin, and many other stories and hints from the author's colleagues, friends, readers, friends' friends, and so on. In gathering these voices deceased and living, Despret adopts a form of multiple and shared authorship. The work, then, and its ideas are the result of a collaborative process that stretches beyond the boundaries between the dead and the living. After all, if the origins of actions instilled by our relation to the dead are undetermined, there is no firm ground for individual agency or authorship either.

Our shared texts and writing in common is thus a practice of collective mourning. While we write and perform through the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, our experience of lockdowns in the diversity of cultural contexts makes collectivity emerge as a necessity and mourning collectively as its unrushed performance. Our performance of writing and thinking together amidst these ends changes the way we relate to performance, nature, finitude, and others. The work we do is part of a larger paradigm shift in collective thinking and authorship—we need new methodologies for collective and collaborative thought and performance. We're mourning performance and mourning the ends not to move past them, but to stay with them.

The witnessing aspect is the core instrument of the tradition of the mourner, the storyteller, the dengbej in the near east. Its very resistance to disappearing is its transmission through the personal and collective memories. The storyteller prolongs the witness accounts from the past to the future, invites others to join in the mourning, acts as an agent of the justification of the subaltern culture's presence on the land and claims for rights to exist. Today, the Kurdish Dengbej tradition, performed especially by women, carries the history of women's place in resistance and the political stand of the region's subaltern cultures.

jan kühling · 22:32, 1 juin (CEST)

maybe take this down to and connect it to the description of dengbej below?

Eero Laine · 22:38, 1 juin (CEST)

Combine or remove the repetitions, yes?

Nilüfer Gros · 15:08, 2 juin (CEST)

Add: Dengbejs are carriers of history in Kurdish tradition, a history untold sometimes taboo that vibrates in the land despite its colonisation. Much like the ashouks of Armenian tradition,....

Nilüfer Gros · 15:10, 2 juin (CEST)

I needed to add this because only talking about Kurdish people becomes politically incorrect, yet we may add somewhere: In northern Kurdistan, ancient Armenia, current day Turkey, ...

Sozita Goudouna · 15:47, 2 juin (CEST)

agreed

Adham Hafez ⟩ ⋯
May 21, 2021

Dengbej is mostly male, rarely female. I am not sure how to mention the gender aspect of it here

Sozita Goudouna ⋯
May 25, 2021 (edited May 25, 2021)

I added next to the second use of the term : - a genre performed mainly by men - perhaps this resolves it?

Reply or add others with @

TO MOURN THE ENDS

"Grief that hollows us inside invites us to take shelter in the cavity dug by the act of mourning." This sentence, written by one of us, was cut in one of our editing sessions, to be rescued by someone else some days later. Some of us tend to agree with theorists who believe that "mourning can remain permanently incomplete, not continuously, but intermittently."[12] Others in our group find this claim problematic and maintain the Freudian standpoint that mourning ends with acceptance and ability to integrate the experience of loss and make sense of it. We meet at these intersections and despite differences develop consensus, sometimes quickly, sometimes warily. At the same time, once opened, a *capacity* for mourning remains a permanent possibility activated in response to loss and grief. One should aim not to suppress and get rid of mourning, but to allow mourning to transform the subject, and to experience its fluid state. It is not the finality of the process that is the key feature differentiating mourning and melancholia, but the narcissistic investment to lack. Melancholia centers the loss of unconditional

---

12 L. Scott Lerner, "Mourning and Subjectivity from Bersani to Proust, Klein, and Freud," *Diacritics* 37, no 1 (2007): 52.

possession, whereas mourning finds grief for an object that has been lost.

Our own individual mourning practices come to the fore when we consider the nexus between our melancholia and mourning. Mourning occurs in practices and performances that witness, including personal approaches such as lighting candles, visiting gravesites, and keeping a shrine. Looking at an end, watching it, being part of it, witnessing together are modalities of receiving a catastrophe. As this book might be seen as a ritualized act of mourning in a time of world calamity, we turn to other collective performances that ritualize the end. These are performances of mourning in practice that some of us have participated in or have witnessed. We share them here and with each other as examples of performances of commoning and collective witnessing.

The dynamics of witnessing are most explicit in moments of catastrophe and ends. The witness speaks for those who can no longer; it is a position that goes against individual subjectivity, to be able to speak for the other. As David Kessler notes: "Each person's grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be

witnessed."[13] Witnessing and testimony are situated at an end time, they are always in relation to an end, and pass that end on, sustain it, interweave it in the present by resonating with the ends that constitute us, our mortality, and our past and future. The literature on catastrophes is dominated by questions of witnessing, memory, transmission, and unofficial histories. In his book *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century,* Marc Nichanian examines the relationship between survival and witnessing through the examination of literature on the Armenian genocide that took place in 1915. Nichanian examines the responsibility of the writer to collect and recreate the witness who becomes the fugitive, the annihilated, and explains the will to survive the catastrophe, the end, to record the truth despite official narratives and politics.[14] This vitality of the witness, survivor, transmitter, and performer who lives in the end can be heard in the vocals of the *dengbêj,* the transmitter of Kurdish history, as well as through Armenian laments sung in this geography a century ago mourning a people and

---

13   David Kessler, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grie*f (Scribner, 2019), 29. See also Guy Cools, *Performing Mourning: Laments In Contemporary Art* (Valiz, 2021).

14   Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Gomidas Institute, 2002).

a lost land, or in Yazidi laments sung to mourn those killed in the chaos following the Syrian Civil War. In the past and the present, transforming witness accounts into performances of mourning seems to be inherent to the region's impulse in the face of the end.

In a different region and cultural setting, American artist Taryn Simon also addressed the anatomy of grief and the intricate systems that are devised to contend with what the artist calls the "irrationality of the universe." In discussing this, we discover that, years before this book began and before knowing each other, two of us attended the performative installation "An Occupation of Loss" that Simon staged at the Park Avenue Armory in New York, with more than thirty professional mourners from Burkina Faso, Russia, Venezuela, Greece, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia.[15] The hired performers were placed in a series of eleven massive, hollow concrete towers that looked like organ pipes and were set in a semi-circle. The sculptural installation consisted of individual spaces for each mourner. Each silo-like structure (48 feet high) served as a setting for a live performance by a professional mourner who chanted and performed

15 Taryn Simon, "An Occupation of Loss," *Park Avenue Armory,* New York, September 13–25, 2016, https://www.armoryonpark.org/programs_events/detail/taryn_simon.

other rituals while sitting inside their tower. Following a choreographed promenade, the mourners entered the organ pipes and commenced their lamentations; they created a cacophony of mourning, with their sound joining a chorus of different lamentations. The audience was invited to move through the sculptural formations, stepping into the compact mourning rooms, or to participate from a distance. Between performances, participants could enter the organ pipes and perform their own lament.

In consultation with linguists, musicologists, anthropologists, and historians, the visual artist systematically researched surviving practices of lament, many of which trace their origins to pre-Christian and pre-Islamic eras. Within Simon's performance, the status of Yazidi, Albanian, and Greek lamenters as professionals—performing away and apart from their usual contexts—brings up tensions between ritualistic practices and contemporary performance practices, "authentic" and staged emotion, representation and fetishization, and spontaneity and script. However, professional mourners within their contexts are not representing mourning, but undertaking mourning itself. The practice of mourning emerges through geographically and culturally specific "performances."

In the recent history of colonialism, occupation, state oppression, and ethnic and religious wars in

Possibilities for this document (how to engage with this document)

Become aware of the spatiality of the document. Realize you might be sharing it at the same time with other people, who for now look like cursors on your screen. You might be alone, but people have already thought of a layout to their contributions.

countries that have been founded in the Middle
East, mourning has been a continuous performative
practice conserving the urgency of the end in chants
and ululations. Some technical aspects of these
performances are that there are shared techniques
between performances of joy and performances of
mourning. The end is part of daily life not only be-
cause conflicts and war have reigned over the region
recently, but also because performances of mourning
are encrypted within cultures going back in time,
including Armenian, Kurdish, Arabic, Yezidi, Assyrian,
and more. It is a survival tool for bodies to experience
the sound of mourning, those living in the end along
with those performing it; it is a remedial cultural
phenomenon for the performer and the listener.

LAMENTATION AS RESISTANCE

The omnipresence of stratified historical ends
produces its vocal performance within the minefield
of the everyday, generating the culture of living in
the end and inhabiting the end. It is from within such
a context that the public performance of mourning
produces the practice of lamentation. The transmis-
sion of catastrophic ends to affective performance is a

traditional practice matured over generations.[16] Currently, the practice of mourning in the Middle East/West Asian/North African region is particularly visible in the Egyptian practice of ʿadid, and the Kurdish tradition of *dengbêj.* Only some of us have witnessed performances of *dengbêj* or ʿadid firsthand, however, we consider them together, sharing performance, authorship, and mourning.

In *dengbêj,* a genre performed mainly but not exclusively by men, the storyteller deplores past and present tragedies in prose. The witnessing aspect is the core instrument of the tradition of the mourner, the storyteller, the *dengbêj* in Turkish Kurdistan. Witnessing resists disappearing as it is transmitted through personal and collective memories. The storyteller prolongs the witness accounts from the past to the future, invites others to join in the mourning, and acts as an agent of the subaltern culture's presence on the land and claims for rights to exist. "[T]hese voices [...] made their hearts (*dil*) or livers (*ceger*) 'burn,'

16 See, for example, Estelle Amy de la Bretèque, "Vocalisation des émotions dans les funérailles yézidies d'Arménie," in *Mythes, rites et émotions: les funérailles le long de la Route de la Soie,* ed. Anna Caiozzo (Honoré Champion, 2016), 265–79.

reigniting the residues of pain,"[17] observes Marlene Schäfers about women listening to a woman performing *dengbêj* lamenting their collective history in Turkish Kurdistan. Reciting the memory of the deceased in prose, the lamentation is "burned" to embody the longing, not only for the deceased but also for a homeland, for people who have been exiled and forced to migrate.[18]

Today, the Kurdish *dengbêj* tradition, reappropriated more and more by women, carries the history of women's place in resistance and the political stand of the region's subaltern cultures. The *dengbêj* practiced by women doesn't only embody the counter-memory to official hegemonic histories imposed in the region, the history of local events, myths, victories, defeats, and injustices, but also makes connections with personal tragedies like the death of a loved one. This is a gendered performance associating suffering to women, mourning to mothers or distressed lovers, re-

---

17 Marlene Schäfers, "Archived Voices, Acoustic Traces, and the Reverberations of Kurdish History in Modern Turkey," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 61, no. 2 (2019): 465.

18 Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu Gros, "Carrying the Nest: (Re)writing History through Embodied Research," *Journal of Embodied Research* 2, no. 1 (2019): 3, video, 23:30.

membering gender-based complexities of the region.[19] These voices carry the political and historiographical weight of the Kurdish liberation movement and resistance through the embodiment of sensual and intimate reverberations, revealing vocality as a "sonic and affective question as much as a representational one."[20] The mourner laces voice, self, and agency to perform the end while resisting it. For women who endure the violence the region is currently witnessing, it can be a remedy to suffering, a necessity for their survival. As such, in the mode of lamentation, the personal, the political, and the public mourning are interlaced to form a landscape of mourning, lamenting bodies in resistance.

Between practices such as *ta'zieh*—condolence theater[21]—in Iran or *ʿadid* in Egypt, mourning is

---

19 Schäfers, "Archived Voices," 453.

20 Ibid., 459.

21 In Persian cultural reference, *ta'zieh* is a kind of "condolence theater," a drama inspired by historical or religious events, conveyed wholly through music and song and often based on heroic tales of love, sacrifice, and resistance to evil. This genre is similar to the passion play, a religious drama of medieval origin dealing with the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Christ. *Ta'zieh,* meaning comfort or condolence (literally, "mourning") formed part of the ten-day ceremony of

present in social and artistic lives within that region. In ʿadid, women performers are trained to cry, scream, ululate, beat their chests, and endure intense breathing work. The Egyptian tradition of performing ʿadid potentially pre-dates Islamic notions of mourning. In fact, in many readings of Islam, mourning that uses public crying and screaming is frowned upon, and in stricter religious sects it is forbidden. ʿAdid then occupies this troubling space, serving the function to engage with and move through ends. Women who professionally perform ʿadid for hire live on the outskirts of cities; in Cairo many of them live in what is known in English as the "City of the Dead," a collection of large scale gravesites and mausoleums around the city where the living, who cannot afford a better life, live with the dead within the buildings of the mausoleums. By being professional death workers living on burial grounds, these performers differentiate themselves from the middle class religiosity of the city

mourning held annually by the Shiites to mark the anniversary of the death of the Imam Hosein, who, with his family, was murdered in the Babylonian desert of Kerbela in 680 CE at the command of the Omayyad caliph Yazid. See also Yassaman Khajehi and Christian Biet, "From Ritual to Performance: Ta'zieh in Iran Today," *Iranian Studies* 56, no. 4 (2023): 671–84.

center and an Islam that polices affective mourning, and exist on the subliminal fringe between life and death, between the city and its edge, professionally mourning.

Most of the mourning practices that have a professional legitimacy within the subaltern social spheres of Middle Eastern countries have been either forbidden by "modernizing" and centralizing states (like Turkey, Iran, or Egypt) or have been the subject of ethnomusicology studies in Western universities where they are not forbidden. For instance, documentation and distribution of *dengbêj* performances have been forbidden by the Turkish state and other states where the Kurdish language has been "threatening" to nationalistic agendas. Conservative Islamic views seek to ban ʿ*adid* and alienate it in Egypt, the way the British colonizers banned *zar* performances in Egypt in the early twentieth century. However, the transmission of *dengbêj* or ʿ*adid* is and has been through bodies and memory. From professional ʿ*adid* mourners to Kurdish storytellers (also called *dengbêj*) to Armenian laments that carry the memory of the genocide, the regional sonorities cry out ends, mourn with a never-ending urgency, and do so publicly and collectively. The pain of mourning intimately interpenetrates every emotional and somatic fiber amplifying its wounding

effects across the body and beyond, to bodies over generations and across borders in lands migrated to.

> *Whatever*
> *This scream of mine tries to say*
> *It is fated to last beyond any possible end.*[22]

So what may it mean to share mourning, in performance, in the world, facing extinction? Can we choose to learn from these regional practices that continue to mourn ongoing ends in geographies whose end is ignored and that are left to a determined fate imposed planetarily? "Geography means destiny" in the renowned words of Ibn Khaldun. Does it? Can we change the objectifying, curiosity-driven look to subaltern performativities and allow ourselves to be inspired by them to collaborate in mourning as a resistance?

By acknowledging the inequity in how vulnerabilities and dependencies on care are distributed, organized, and experienced, the enactment of subjective and embodied mourning can shift into an interdependent, collective, and intersubjective mourn-

---

22 Pier Paolo Pasolini, dir., *Teorema* (Garzanti, 1968).

and systems of capital. However, as Jon McKenzie theorizes, performance has also become a power formation and a paradigm of normativity. We find ourselves between a performative ephemerality that is close to post-fordist and highspeed consumer capitalism, and a temporal art form, one whose finitude we might learn from again, in order to engage in the myriad ends that surround, imply and entangle us".

We are arguing about a collective radical creative mourning rather than an edited mourning. In juxtaposition to the collection of individual essays of the edited volume 'Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief'[22] our mourning is co-written. This is an essential part of our" claim – the practice of releasing your own control and sovereignty invites in other things, and this is important for mourning and eco-conscious ethics. Through a resistance to Enlightenment tenets and practices, "all creatures can come back to life."[23] The work, then, is about dismantling the notion of Man itself. Porosity connects the Nature and Man divide with voids, holes which open in human thinking which let the ecology like the porous membrane of the skin. Rather than a bridge over a river dividing the human and ecological, voids must open in the walls Man built to keep nature out. Morton names this wall built in the Neolithic *The Severing*, which he describes as "a trauma that some humans persist in reenacting on and among ourselves (and obviously on and among other lifeforms)."[11] *The Severing* distinguishes (human) humans from the (ecological) real or as he names it, the *symbiotic real*. This wall between Man and the *symbiotic real* supposedly sets up a distinction between the feeling and thinking lifeforms the unthinking ecological automata which cannot be put to productive agricultural use. By building this wall and initiating Morton's *Severing*,

---

19 Herbert Blau, "Virtually Yours: Presence, Liveness, Lessness," *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. Janelle Rienelt & Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 539.

20 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.

21 Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1997), 3.

22 Milstein, Cindy.

23 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University

Malin Palani Apr 24, 2021

Note to self and Kristof: I made some changes here to smoothen the thinking but didn't want to lose your (Kristof) previous comment so here it is: connect this back to relation to non-humans, to the afterlife of performance (what the dead/absent make us do, an agency without clear source/ an assemblage that requires us going through the milieu (situated)).
Show less

Aneta Stojnić Apr 23, 2021

This paragraph needs some unpacking

Sozita Goudouna Apr 23, 2021

Note to self: do we want to introduce "Rebellious Mourning" and the contrast between what we are doing?

Eero Laine Apr 23, 2021

Good idea.

ing between sentient beings. Like care,[23] mourning is an embodied, performed activity, and at the same time mourning, like care, "implicates our lives in each others' lives, mapping and animating a politics of promise for our times."[24] The embodied mourning and caring subject is attuned to the bodies of others and, as Maurice Hamington argues, "this does not suggest that caregivers are artists [...] but it does suggest that caregivers are artists in terms of being aesthetically attuned to the bodies, actions, and relations of themselves to others."[25] Moreover, performance practice reorders embodied attunements in time and space towards expanded scales, collective ends, and the mourning that comes.

23 See recent research on care, for example, The Care Collective: Andreas Chatzidakis et al., *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence* (Verso, 2020), and WWHIVDD Community, "What Does a COVID-19 Doula Do?," *One Institute,* https://www.onearchives.org/what-does-a-covid19-doula-do-zine/.

24 Judith Butler, Review of *The Care Manifesto, Verso Books,* https://www.versobooks.com/books/3706-care-manifesto.

25 Maurice Hamington, "Politics Is Not a Game: The Radical Potential of Care," in *Care Ethics and Political Theory,* eds. Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington (Oxford University Press, 2015), 279.

Endings are transformative, sometimes filled with the joy for a more just system that might shape everyday interactions, otherwise overwrought with the sorrow of destruction and death. Endings necessitate realizing different modes of being and becoming together embedded in *others'* worth, in a depth of pain and loss. These performances of ends—mourning; witnessing; lamentation; care; coming together to write, think, study—simultaneously decenter a unified subjectivity and develop a capacity to take responsibility for self and others. Mourning yields space that opens ecological modes of thinking. An ecological attitude in times of catastrophes and crises needs a sustained, collaborative ethos that avoids the fatalism and defeatism lingering in melancholia. This ethos manifests in the work behind the words on this page.

We revel in the long pauses between us because they are humble moments of uncertainty and waiting. We are sustained by the inaccurate dissonances of our readings of each other that create moments of conflict and care that we cannot do without. Through our work in writing this book, we exercise an ethics of sharing. Mourning becomes a practice, not just nor primarily of remembering but of making (with)—a process of remaining open with others. Again, we turn to words written by one of us in our common online document, a story of marking time and an encounter

with others. An individual experience that becomes ours as they speak to our bodies, echoing the imperative of joining others in (their) mourning.

A GLIMPSE OF A SUNDAY MORNING

Sunday 6:01 am

A flash of light flickers across the window. I sweep open the curtains. What is it? A flashlight? A piece of paper in the wind?

6:02 am

Back to bed.

8:01 am

Rain pelts against the glass. Another flash of light hits the window. Strange.

8:02 am

Wipe away condensation. Ah, I see. It's a shiny tin can reflecting light from the yard.

8:03 am

Look closer. A little animal is playing with the tin can. Cheeky thing, sneaking into the yard. Oh well, let it be.

8:39 am

Brew coffee. Peek out the door. The animal appears to be nibbling at something inside the tin can.

8:41 am

Tiptoe out into the rain. With its head inside the tin can, and its fur coat drenched to the skin, I can't work out what kind of animal it is. A rabbit? A possum? A giant rat?

8:42 am

Kneel down. Why doesn't it run away? Its breathing is hollow, slow, elongated. I realize its head is stuck inside the can. What a freaky sight.

8:43 am

Run inside, find a pair of gardening gloves and run back into the yard. Try to wedge the can off its head. It hisses and howls.

8:44 am

Run inside. Sip coffee. What can I do? Run outside. Tug the can again. An ear wedges free. Ah, it's a cat. It whines and scratches. It stands on its hind legs and thrusts its tin can head back and forth in the air. A scene from a horror film.

From Theater to
Performance Ecologies

The ecological paradigm is interconnected to aesthetic, material, and institutional changes in theater making and performance studies. In 1994 Una Chaudhuri, a renowned Indian-American performance scholar, argued that the history of Western theater depicts a "complicity in an anti-ecological humanist tradition" in treating nature as a mere metaphor and a symbolic depiction of wilderness, of what is "other" than human.[1] Instead, she called for a "turn towards the literal'' and a remapping of the different links that bind theater in its aesthetic, cultural,

1   Una Chaudhuri, "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theater," *Theater* 25, no. 1 (1994): 28.

ethical, and institutional dimensions to the natural world and the constant transformations thereof. Her text represents an essential manifesto of a "theater ecology"—of the theatrical representation of an inherent relationality of humanity and "nature."

The loss of biodiversity and the destruction of natural habitats have drastically increased since Chaudhuri was writing in the 1990s.[2] The scale, range, and impact of the changes in the natural environment have changed significantly. That demands not only a reshifting of the epistemic structures that ground the temporal and spatial coordinates both in the theater and outside of it. It also urges us to rethink the scope of both what we perceive as "ends" as well as "collectivity." As Anna Tsing argues, "to listen to and tell a rush of stories is a method. And why not make the strong claim and call it a science, an addition to knowledge? [...] But we have a problem with scale."[3] Indeed, perhaps as a way of avoiding the

---

2   See, for example, "UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'," *United Nations,* May 6, 2019, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/.

3   Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton

old clichés of local and global, we might think rather in terms of scale.

Performance is notoriously situated and sited, even as it necessarily intervenes, opens, and shifts scales. It forces us to imagine that which cannot be recovered—to think beyond our own ephemerality and finitude. None of us were in Frankfurt in 2013 but if we were, German-French choreographer Antonia Baehr might take us by the hand and lead us onto a stage that might be a gallery space or even a museum of natural history. We might see big letters set on the floor, some chairs, some seemingly scientific artifacts, a costume of a tiger—or is it a rug? Baehr's perfor-mance piece *Abecedarium Bestiarium*[4] is an inquiry into the documentary states of recently and long-extinct (non-)human animals; by presenting short scores on extinct animals, she portrays and performs a history of violence. This is a history that was—willingly or not—undertaken by the human animal and led to the extinction of the Forest Tarpan, the Tasmanian Tiger, the Yangtze River Dolphin, and many more. Baehr, furthermore, portrays those (f)acts of interspecies and intergenerational violence around the notion of

University Press, 2015), 37.

4 Antonia Baehr, "Abecedarium Bestiarium: Portraits of Affinities in Animal Metaphors," Berlin, May 3–5, 2013.

affinity, of friendship, and of a very subjective account of the intimacy of human and non-human animals, and of life and death:

> My name is Antonia Baehr, which means bear in German, and I was born in Berlin, which is pronounced bear-lin. [...] What might it be that brings together Baehr, bear and the Berlin bear? Well, of course, B as in bear, and Baehr as in bear. But what does this "as in" mean? What is the relation between A and B that it stands for?[5]

Prompted in part by related inquires to her friend Dodo, Baehr invited friends to "find the affinity between yourself and an extinct animal. Create a score for a short and personal piece for me, about your affinity to this animal, keeping our friendship in mind. The animal represents you and the piece is about the relationship between you and me."[6] The interspecies transmutation is further complicated by extinction, an impossible speaking back from beyond humanness and beyond existence.

5   Antonia Baehr et al., *ABeCedarium Bestiarium: Portraits of Affinities in Animal Metaphors* (far° festival des arts vivants, 2012–2014), 7.

6   Ibid.

In her performance, she imbues the extinct animals with historical agency and acknowledges them as subjects of history. She also portrays how the singular is linked to a collective across boundaries of numbers, species, and life. The scores for the performance were written by her close friends, which Baehr mentions and relates to before every animal score is performed. They are at the same time choreographic apparatus, medium, and gift. They determine Baehr's performance, allow her to convey meaning and, finally, allow Baehr to reach out with an offering. Her singing, dancing, and narrating become tokens that allow not for a becoming-one, but for a coming-together: of the ghosts of the extinct species, of her friends and family members, of herself that is always another, always "Baehr, an extinct animal." By performing an intimate act of mourning that is of both utmost joy and gravity, she touches on—but never reaches—a community of (non-)human, (non-)living, (non-)poetic animals.

Ecological thinking with the ends requires us not only to reconsider collectivities as including more-than-human beings, but also as stretching beyond life, to extinct and absent entities that all have their own particular kinds of agencies, as portrayed by the artist. The questions Baehr is tackling encompass and go beyond the issues of the "human/non-human" rift.

Please also continue to write in the "All These Realities" Document, collecting: Places, Practices, Shifts, Examples (as in: paradigmatic events or stories, Scenes, Sentences).

"Lived and observed performances": that is our archive.

And if you see connections between the docs, you might note that in your comments on this document.

Instead, she works with and through scale and scope: by presenting neither generic nor individual examples, by zooming from particular moments in human and non-human history to grand scale extinction events, she echoes the worlds of Vinciane Despret: "The world dies from each absence; the world bursts from absence."[7] Performance art and performance theory do not only represent, but question those relations of scale and its consequences that are differentially experienced. Baehr's performance suggests how performance practice can make visible connections among species, subverting human-non-human and living-non-living boundaries, while also bringing different time scales into focus in the present moment of performance itself.

If we are, as Baehr suggests, a deeply interdependent community, the scale of our mourning and the stakes of our collaborations come into focus when we consider the range and the impact of the changes in the natural environment. As artists and scholars working in theater and performance we

7   Vinciane Despret, "Afterword: It Is an Entire World That Has Disappeared," trans. Matthew Chrulew, in *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations,* eds. Deborah Bird Rose, Thom Van Dooren, and Matthew Chrulew (Columbia University Press, 2017), 217.

are accustomed to thinking about scale. Theater is necessarily hyper-local and yet we must think beyond our immediate locality and, in many ways, performance helps us to do just that. We work and live on one scale, even as the ends we face surround us on another. As a consequence, we have to reshift the epistemic structures that ground the temporal and spatial coordinates, both in the outside world and in the theater as well. This is the challenge of the Anthropocene, the new geological epoch, which is not a qualitatively changed relation of culture and nature, but a changed conception of how to think of "ecological interconnectedness" or the relation of humanity and the geological strata.[8]

Scaling designates the epistemic action of transforming something according to a scale factor, a preestablished point of (numerical) reference. To "scale" does not necessarily mean to make something bigger or smaller, but instead to transform something while keeping a stable relation to something else. It is a way of transfiguring while keeping a stable vanish-

---

8   Sarah Louise Gates, "Ecological Interconnectedness: Entwined Selves, Transcendent and Immanent," in *Roots, Routes and a New Awakening: Beyond One and Many and Alternative Planetary Futures,* ed. Ananta Kumar Giri (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 75–97.

ing point of comparison. The Anthropocene urges a different way of thinking; this could be the kind of thinking opened up by the perspective of the end, by death and extinction. A perspective whose embrace of finitude breaks open the individual "I," rendering it available for new forms of collectivities and relationships. Those relations that enable a more humble way of being and performing in and of the world, together.

What use is performance in the face of the Anthropocene and amidst the ends? It stretches the bounds of rationality to think that the small and localized performance means something greater or is capable of shifting the scales. And yet it must. We proceed, then, like many theater and performance artists and scholars, with this potential in mind. A single word on a page changes a document, a single performance or act changes the world of possibilities. Surely, this is unsustainable—and yet performance endures. Overshadowed by these outlandishly impossible scales, we look to particular sites of performance that think alongside us.

DEAD FISH, ART, AND ECOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE: SEVEN GEOGRAPHIES

N 30°42'18", E 32°20'39"

I grew up near the Suez Canal and my family and I still live near this area. The Suez Canal is one of the largest man-made canals in the world, and it was inaugurated in 1869. The triumph of modernity! Two of the largest seas on earth were opened to one another. The earth was ripped, hand dug, creating a large new vein for global navigation, which served also as a massive graveyard to all the enslaved workers who died while digging the canal under the utmost inhumane conditions. At least 120,000 workers died in the digging of the 120-miles canal. 1,000 dead bodies per mile. 1.5 million men enslaved for the project working under a corvée system, unpaid and unfree labor, in which tens of thousands have disappeared where still today we do not know what happened to them.

This massive and violent geographical change caused similarly massive and violent migratory changes. Known as the Lessepsian migration and named after Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat who masterminded the project of the Suez Canal. When asked to defend his case on why the Suez Canal as a project would be technically feasible, Ferdinand used his studies of European rivers and

estuaries, unable to leave his home epistemology and geography as he embarked to rupture another epistemology and geography. In this interspecies migration, just as fish migrated north from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, settler colonizers migrated south from Europe into Egypt and other African countries that were colonized by European states at the time. Scientific records speak only of the marine migration, the Lessepsian migration, and not the interspecies one. In a similar fashion, scientific records mention the loss of biodiversity when thinking of the marine ecosystems post-Suez, but not of the losses of an expanded notion of biodiversity, that would include the death of over 120,000 enslaved workers, the demolishing of indigenous architecture and urban constructions, and the banning of multiple art forms—biodiversity losses as product of the inauguration of the canal, and as product of the migration of the settler colonialists in Egypt and in Africa more broadly. The expansive loss of this biodiversity is documented through absence. The loss of songs to the sea, and the disappearance of songs about fish that were common in the Suez area prior to the canal, is an absence that addresses the marine and cultural changes that happened because of the Lessepsian migration. With the radical change of their surrounding environment, dwellers of Suez stopped singing to the sea, or about the fish.

implode, where causality, effect and its stable epistemic grounds shatter.[96] We proceed, then, like many theatre and performance artists and scholars, with this potential derangement in mind. Surely this small and localized event might mean something greater or be capable of shifting the scales.

DEAD FISH, ART, AND ECOLOGICAL COHORTING: FIVE GEOGRAPHIES

30°42'18" N 32°20'39" E

The Suez canal is one of the largest man made canals in the world, and it was inaugurated in 1869. The triumph of modernity! Two of the largest seas on earth were opened to one another. The earth was ripped, hand dug, creating a large new vein for global navigation, which served also as a massive graveyard to all the slave workers who died while digging the canal under utmost inhumane conditions. At least 120,000 workers died in the digging of the 120 miles canal.[97] 1000 dead bodies per mile. 1.5 million men enslaved for the project working under a corvée system, of unpaid and unfree labor, in which tens of thousands have disappeared where until today we do not know what happened to them.

This massive and violent geographical change caused similarly massive and violent migratory changes. Known as the Lessepsian migration and named after Ferdinand de Lesseps, a french diplomat who masterminded the project of the Suez Canal. When asked to defend his case on why the Suez Canal as a project would be technically feasible, Ferdinand used his studies of European rivers and estuaries, unable to leave

---

Evan Moritz
May 7, 2021

Note to self: look for examples of "derangement of scales" in performance. It might be nice to open this concept up a bit, especially before we move into our discussion on Chaudhuri.

jan
May 10, 2021

super important!!!!

Eero Laine
May 10, 2021

I agree—I think issue of scale is central to our line of thought from the massive and overwhelming to the thinking of mourning in our field to institutions to our own (small) collective, which is itself an attempt to respond to the massive and overwhelming: what scales and in what direction?

Eero Laine
May 22, 2021

Marked as resolved

N 16°32'59.99", E 107°37'59.99"

A violent catastrophe took place on the central coast of Vietnam, in the provinces of Hà Tĩnh, Quảng Bình, Quảng Trị, and Thừa Thiên Huế, far from Canada where I live. In April 2016, 322 tonnes of fish carcasses along with various other sea life washed up onto the shore. I cannot say why I was drawn to this story, living more that 13,500 kilometers from the disaster, but I remembered the annual fish die-offs that happened in Maryland and Pennsylvania where I grew up and recalled the smell every year at the harbor where the deaths would amass. In Vietnam, it was discovered that the Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Corporation, a subsidiary of the Taiwanese conglomerate Formosa Plastics Group, was responsible for a chemical spill that poisoned 200 kilometers of coastline. Yet, shortly after the event, a great deal of uncertainty surrounded the dead fish washing ashore. In this interstice, between disaster and admission of guilt by Formosa, the company denied culpability and the lack of infor-mation led to poems, songs, and performance as the most visible responses to the accident. In the midst of my long-distance and quite anonymous mourning for these fish and people in a place I never visited, I was struck by the news items and videos which emerged

regarding Viet Art Space's "The Pain of Fish."[9] Viet Art Space is a group of six artists—Le Nguyen Manh, Ly Truc Son, Nguyen Van Summer, Pham Chi Loi, Tran Nhat, and Philip Pham—who collaborated with French artist Maxime Lacino to perform this piece on April 29, 2016, in this moment of confusion, catastrophe, and death.

The artists processed along the Huong River carrying fish, chanting, and playing songs of mourning. Le Nguyen Manh, whose body was painted white, walked and crawled with a dead fish in his mouth for much of the piece. Since the artists lacked the proper permit, the authorities eventually broke up the performance and took the artists to the police station. Manh's section, which he titles "fish," continues a central concern in both his paintings and performance work with the relationship between fish and technological disasters.[10] However, this dead fish

---

9   The web presence of this group is mostly found on a private Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/VietArtSpace/. See also Ben Valentine, "Vietnamese Artists Respond to Marine Disaster Through #IChooseFish," *Hyperallergic,* June 27, 2016, https://hyperallergic.com/305568/vietnamese-artists-respond-to-marine-disaster-through-ichoosefish/.

10 In "Trash Mind" (2009), Manh performed as a fish trapped in plastic, and his visual art emphasizes an ongoing concern

functions as a far more charged object than a theatrical prop or sculptural component. This unexpected mass death filled the shores, and upset the livelihoods of over 200,000 people who made their living from fishing in the region.[11] There were nationwide protests over the government's inaction both before and after Formosa's admission of responsibility. The striking image of death in Manh's mouth is both economical and ecological, intimately and viscerally carrying the smell and taste of death.

"The Pain of Fish" evidences various endings, deaths, gaps, and disappearances in ecology. Manh's union of the living human with the dead fish closes the gap between "the human" and "nature." Human culpability for ecological death through technological

with the relationship of fish to Vietnamese society. Le Nguyen Manh, La Van Son, and Christian Falsnaes, "Tri Tue Rac / Trash Mind," *Hanoi Future Art,* Hà Nội, 2009, https://hanoigrapevine.com/2009/03/lang_entrash-mindlang_enlang_vitri-tue-raclang_vi/, and Le Nguyen Manh, *Saatchi Art,* https://www.saatchiart.com/lenguyenmanh.

11 Trung Hoang et al., "Is Tomorrow Another Day? Coping with an Environmental Disaster: Evidence from Vietnam," conference paper, North East Universities Development Consortium, Ithaca, NY, October 27–28, 2018, http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/NEUDC/paper_541.pdf.

disaster causes further human suffering. The need to recode technological, environmental, and human suffering to one another returns ecology and economy to their etymological roots, where the "household"—eco refers to the ancient Greek word *oikos* that has three distinct meanings: family, family's property, and house—is studied or managed.

The dead fish along the coast of Vietnam changed cultural production and reproduction in the nearby humans—from shifts in occupation and income of local fishers, to "The Pain of Fish"—but the way the cultural contributions of these human inhabitants affect the fish populations remains underexplored outside of the ecological exploitation enacted by Formosa.[12] Centering these ecological ends in performance itself

---

12 Another example of interspecies sentient connection is described by Karen Malpede: "The Lummi tribe is feeding starving Orca whales fresh salmon, transporting the fish in buckets because the salmon no longer thrive where the Orca live. Drumming and praying as they slip beautiful large wild salmon into the sea, a sacrifice, to save other creatures. The Lummi view the Orca as their relatives; their ritual act is intended to stir official conservation efforts. Such stories of the struggles of an enlarging consciousness are dramatiseable. Once told, they lead to other acts imagined and real of interspecies sentient connections." Karen Malpede, "The Necessity of a New Green Federal Theatre

challenges understandings of the unfalsifiable impact cultural performance has on ecology; how, after all, could "The Pain of Fish" affect the fish? Performance becomes a critical juncture for exchange in the incommensurable communicative modes of different species. The ability to "commune with nature" presupposes some common, shared facets for cultural transmission of information, but this also raises questions about how information is transmitted without a shared language or semantically-encoded behavior. If humans are to help build bridges to other species over the chasms we carved between ourselves and our ecology, they must permit two-way traffic. That is, it is not enough for humans to gain information from nature, we must transmit it as well.

N 34°41'4.79", E 135°50'21.59"

One productive locus for interspecies cross-transmission of information lies in individual human acts that affect behavioral change in other species. For example, the Sika deer in Nara, Japan approach humans and bow with them, often expecting food, but white-tailed deer in the northeastern United States stand alert and skeptical or flee at the sound or sight

Project," *HowlRound Theatre Commons,* July 30, 2019, https://howlround.com/necessity-new-green-federal-theatre-project.

of a distant human. This distinction corresponds to a culture in Nara where the Sika deer are symbols of the prefecture, and there is even some speculation about whether the deer transmit the bowing behavior culturally.[13] However, the white-tailed deer that inhabit the campuses, parks, yards, and woods of those of us in the US are not habituated to these practices. Local hunting regulations may cause avoidance of humans in some of the populations.[14] Years of differing human acts do not train the animals to act differently, but perform culturally transmitted expectations of the

13 Sakurako Akita et al., "Variation and Social Influence of Bowing Behavior by Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*)," *Journal of Ethology* 34 (2016): 89–96.

14 This is a point of debate. Schuttler et al. argue that alertness is not triggered by increased hunting activity but by the coinciding of the hunting and mating seasons. However, they do suggest these deer may be engaging in risk-avoiding behavior or that humans do not function as a successful apex predator. See S.G. Schuttler et al., "Deer on the Lookout: How Hunting, Hiking and Coyotes Affect White-tailed Deer Vigilance," *Journal of Zoology* 301, no. 4 (2017): 320–27. Cromsigt et al. argue that human hunting creates broad differences in deer population dispersal by creating a "landscape of fear." Joris P.G.M. Cromsigt et al., "Hunting for Fear: Innovating Management of Human–Wildlife Conflicts," *Journal of Applied Ecology* 50 (2013): 544–49.

people near these deer. While these acts may lack traditional semantic encoding, these deer perform an action to gain a successful effect, similar to Austin's performative utterance—in which language is not only descriptive but has the power of commanding some alteration in reality—but communicated through an action. By developing action-based and embodied utterances, the Sika Deer and people communicate performatively, together. Developing a common language of acts specific to species and their local habits may open the possibility for collaborative acts of performance ends. Furthermore, they center complex expressions of relationships between not only other humans, but different species within ecology. Finding a way to craft such acts collaboratively offers an opportunity for performance as a means of ecological communion.

N 53°49'19.49", E 20°16'23.86"

It was New Year's Eve of 2019, and what would become a global pandemic was just a small headline in the Berlin newspapers. The day was warm, some degrees above 0 celsius. It had rained the day before. As I like to retell myself the story of the cold and snowy winters of central Europe, I inhaled the fresh and humid air with both excitement and anxiety. What will the new year bring? What hopes, what promises

Use the comment function (found under the "Insert" tab above) to comment on the text above the dashed line. (Do not comment on anything below the line. If it is important, move it up and then comment on it.) Try to think editorially. How might the argument be improved? What examples, citations, ideas, or stories would strengthen the argument or flow? Etc.

does the warm wind carry, what ideas and projects will arise from the moist ground? What will change? And how can I be "anew"? Change my own life for the better, be more determined, be more focused, more productive, more successful, conscious, calm, healthy, caring? I saw small buds opening in the undergrowth and heard birds singing as the light faded.

It is not spring though, I remembered, but the midst of winter. At the brink of the new year, I was grieving the fact that my child would not experience winter as I had, would not know the feeling of numb fingers because of hours playing in the snow, and would grow old in a world that knows only two seasons: wet and dry. Environmental melancholia designates the conflicted psychic state of a loss regarding the natural environment that has not been fully processed.[15] It designates not a reaction towards a concrete condition, but towards a projected imaginary.[16] It has a real grounding—in this case the worry for climate change— and its object stays but a subjective projection. Thus,

---

15 Renee Lertzman, *Environmental Melancholia: Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement* (Routledge, 2015).

16 See the analysis of the unique character of the social-historical world and its relations to the individual, to language, and to nature in Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* trans. Kathleen Blamey (MIT Press, 1987).

environmental melancholia is a state inseparably bound to an image of a nature as always already lost, as well as the denial thereof. Every year, there is at least one article in the news that deconstructs my personal truth of "white winter/Christmas," that was shaped by so many TV shows and commercials; for the middle-European lowlands, statistically there is but a 12.5% average of snow for the end of December given the data of the last 100 years. At the brink of the new year, I see a world changed and still just see no more than my own fears, my own petty concept of worlds, of seasons, of change—climate change as constructed upon the fantasies of *Home Alone, Miracle on 34th Street,* and *A Christmas Carol.*

N 37°45'0.00", E 140°28'0.01"

On March 11, 2011 the Eurasian and Pacific tectonic plates in the Pacific Ocean generated a magnitude 9 earthquake; the resulting tsunami that hit the coastal region of Tōhoku in Northern Japan produced a subsequent reactor malfunction and meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. We all watched the videos showing a vast wall of water consuming vehicles, buildings, people, and wide stretches of land and coastline in a growing mix of fluid and muddy debris. The images from the Fukushima Daiichi plant appear to expose the utter inability of humans to

control powerful nuclear forces or to safely produce nuclear energy for consumer use. What happens when the end, the catastrophe, the defeat then perseveres, prolongs, and transforms into an environment? When mourning the ends is a landscape? In examining two pieces of theater that "treat loss and mourning as durational emotional states in the aftermath of Fukushima," Peter Eckersall points towards "a mourning without end—which evokes the dystopian longevity of the post-Fukushima nuclear space of contamination, suffering and death."[17] Mourning performance is ongoing, sited, dangerous—we can only approach it from a distance through representations, video, or images. In the winter and summer of 2014 (and again in the summers of 2016 and 2017, and December of 2019), the movement artist Eiko Otake and the photographer William Johnston visited the Fukushima prefecture to dance within and photograph the affected landscape. The photographs that Johnston took of Eiko dancing with Fukushima comprise the exhibition, performance, film,

---

17   Peter Eckersall, "Performance, Mourning and the Long View of Nuclear Space" *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 7 (2015): 4278, https://apjjf.org/2015/13/6/Peter-Eckersall/4278.html.

and book *A Body in Fukushima.*[18] Otake's body is both singular and general—dancing, performing—amidst the site and ruins of a disaster both particular and ubiquitous. When one of us saw her performing two years later in New York at St. Mark's church, she had brought a large scarf she also worked with during her work in Fukushima. The contaminated object, Otake's body: affected on a small scale by a large-scale event, bringing traces of the disaster to the other side of the world, just as the contaminated water has already spread out across the planet, irrevocably, incompletely. Otake's performance is a derangement of scales, the individual performer mourning and lamenting ongoing loss and inviting us in to perform together.

S 20°14′0.024″, W 43°25′10.2″

On November 5, 2015, a wave of 45 million cubic meters of water and ore tailings swept through Bento Rodrigues, a small district in the city of Mariana, in Minas Gerais State, in Brazil. From my apartment, in São Paulo, I watched the images of the disaster being

18 Eiko Otake and William Johnston, *A Body in Fukushima* (Wesleyan University Press, 2021). Film screenings and exhibitions have occurred in multiple locations since 2015. See artist's website: https://www.eikootake.org/a-body-in-fukushima.

repeated endlessly on TV—another ecological disaster being fetishized in Brazilian media. Nineteen people were killed, and the damage along the Cia Vale do Rio Doce River, one of the most important river basins in the country, was incalculable. Ailton Krenak, a leader of the indigenous Krenak people, who lived in a symbiotic relationship with this river for centuries, wrote about their continuous process of mourning it. "The Doce River, which we Krenaks call Watu, our grandfather, is a person, not a resource, as economists say."[19] When an engineer told him about all the technological infrastructure brought by the mining company responsible for the disaster to recover the river, Krenak replied that the best way to help was to stop any economic activity one hundred kilometers along each side of the river's bank, to which the engineer replied: "but this is impossible."[20] When COVID-19 hit, Krenak stopped his international journeys of activism and retreated to his people's village in Minas. "For some time now, we in the Krenak village were already mourning our Doce River. I did not imagine that the world would bring us this other mourning."[21]

19 Ailton Krenak, *O amanhã não está à venda* (Companhia das Letras, 2020). Translation by author.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

On January 25th, 2019, another dam broke, also in Minas Gerais and from the same company, killing 270 workers in the city of Brumadinho.

S 33°52′40.224″, E 151°12′33.66″

While researching collective acts of mourning in "my" country's history, I came across John Thomas "Jack" Patten, an Aboriginal Australian civil rights activist and journalist. As the President and co-founder of the Aborigines Progressive Association, Patten organized the 1938 "Day of Mourning" protest where they presented Prime Minister Joseph Lyons with his and William Ferguson's manifesto, "Aborigines Claim Citizenship Rights." In the Opening Address to the Day of Mourning protest at Australia Hall in Sydney, Patten said, "January 26, 1938, is not a day of rejoicing for Australia's Aborigines; it is a day of mourning. This festival of 150 years' so-called 'progress' in Australia also commemorates 150 years of misery and degradation imposed upon the original native inhabitants by the white invaders of this country."[22] Contrary to the celebrations going on outside in Sydney and throughout the country as part of the national holiday

22 AIATSIS, "We Hereby Make Protest," *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,* https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/day-of-mourning.

Australia Day, Patten and his assembly declared January 26 to be a "Day of Mourning."[23] They mourned the loss of their country, the loss of their freedom and self-determination, and the deaths of so many of their kin.

PLANETARY PERFORMANCE

This series of situated performances, stories, and geographies show on the one hand that indeed, the scale of mourning and disruption caused by ends is both small and big, synchronous and diachronous. On the other hand, however, the ends are always tied to a specific place, to particular people, and to performances that only circulate in their retelling, their images and archives and memories. We agree with Tsing, who critically points out that scalability is a demand of globalized and progress-driven capitalism, which "banished meaningful diversity."[24] Stories on the other hand, like critical performances, are not scalable, though they bring forth further stories that are interwoven within their own situated connections of scales. We believe it is both a necessity and a benefit from writing collectively, that these stories and

23 Ibid.
24 Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World,* 38.

(p.6).

The tropes of institutional enclosure and its opposite, the commons are slowly emerging in performances and research practices. While collaborating with other artists, still we are in the grey zone of what exactly constitutes for 'commons'. Can there be truly any commons in the sphere of participatory individualism, and how commonality is fostered and nourished, co-existing with having 'one's own voice'? The commons have to be constantly reshaped into commons. Academia is a cyclone of constant negotiation: "...capital's involvement in the University operates through constant feedback cycles that shift between phases of conflict, struggle, co-optation, and disciplinary integration" (p.6).

23

8,346 WORDS UNTIL THE DASHED LINE

.....Reorganization above this line.....

Mourning Continuum

Evan Moritz
Nov 11, 2020

I feel like this section comes as a breath of fresh air after opening sections focused on large claims and theory. Maybe we could ground our introduction in something concrete like this as well to help ground our theory. I also think something concrete could pull the section on melancholia/mourning out of speculation.

Sozita Goudouna
Nov 10, 2020

perhaps it makes sense to start discussing about collaboration here and integrate the section on collaboration here

---

Malin Palani
Nov 11, 2020

This section is very grounding for me as one path for thinking beyond the "genius artist" and other over-valued subjectivities that are spoken about earlier in the document. I think that there can be a more effective link made between these aspects of our ⊞ ict.

experiences, all these realities come together to form a more nuanced and "decentered" collection. These "seven geographies" were all initially authored by one of us, but they were then revised, edited, and re-written by the collective. That is, they were authored by an "I" and authored again by our "we." Indeed, as many disasters show us, it remains a complicated exercise to go back and forth and across various scales. It is often difficult to think between the situated scale of a particular moment, connecting it to the spatio-temporal scale of radiation and pollution, while also holding the even larger and yet in its own way also locally situated level of catastrophic climate dynamics causing even more "natural disasters" in this era we still call the Anthropocene. We are convinced that "one story" does not suffice and, when globalized, is harmful, yet we are also aware that many stories are not enough.

Perhaps we need to be able to zoom in and out of these situated sites of performance, while considering their larger significance, to approach the planetary. The continual shifting of scale from the individual to the global and back again may offer glimpses of how we experience the planetary perspective in moments of catastrophe and performance of the ends. As we have previously discussed, many cultures already have experienced or continue to experience their ends—this world is built upon the ends of others. Far from being

some distant historical period, these processes are made and remade today, cascading ends upon ends.

But why not just escape these ends? What can we do? Is our only solution to go to the moon or Mars? One of the manifestations of the perilous Eurocentric universalism is the expansion of this ideology projected even beyond the planet Earth itself. That is, amidst ecological collapse and extinction lies a belief that people must leave Earth ... and soon. Indeed, billionaires are already launching themselves into space. However, this apparently expansive solution actually only extends the current crises, spreading the ends outward and into new territories.

The corporate solutions to ecological problems only work to ensure the expansion of capital and increase the speed of impending ends. Elon Musk's Tesla company, for instance, develops electric vehicles (for luxury car owners), but Musk's other company, SpaceX, is on track to release 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year when operating at its desired capacity.[25] Musk regularly claims that people need to develop interplanetary colonies due to increasing

25 Ian Whittaker, "What Is the Environmental Impact of the SpaceX Falcon Heavy Launch?," *BBC Science Focus,* February 12, 2018, https://www.sciencefocus.com/space/what-is-the-environmental-impact-of-the-spacex-falcon-heavy-launch/.

climate catastrophes. The urgency of the ends here is thus redirected away from Earth and into space. This redirection favors the increased development of speed to reduce space. Natalie Bormann develops this connection, arguing that "space becomes critical by virtue of performances that generate a sense of instantaneity and ubiquity."[26] Bormann crafts her arguments in regards to the militarization of outer space, and there are many overlaps to the development of space through the performance of speed and assumed universality by private capitalists looking to leave Earth and, as a recent t-shirt of Musk's read, "Occupy Mars." This nefarious performance of speed and exodus provides new flows for capital and is already expanding new markets and investment potential for governments and billionaires alike.

But the urgency of leaving the Earth behind, its seemingly impossible odds for success and continued colonizing mentality, only serves to reemphasize the urgency of our call for collaborative work with the planetary environment. Are we to trust the intentions and future health of this planet to automotive

---

26 Natalie Bormann, "The Lost Dimension? A Spatial Reading of US Weaponization of Space," in *Securing Outer Space,* eds. Natalie Bormann and Michael Sheehan (Routledge, 2009), 79.

companies, like Tesla? Can we believe there is a market solution to mechanically remove CO_2 from the atmosphere? The end of a comfortable or habitable Earth hovers in our atmosphere, but as is the case with many of the ends experienced by those who are not global capitalists, this end is a new beginning, a new market for those who control the economic resources of our species. This logic seems to place planetary ends at the same fork in the road Bruno Latour recognizes: "To modernize or to ecologize? That's the question."[27] Questions of "what to do" in the midst of ends impacts personal and institutional practices.

In this regard, it becomes important to recognize the different ways of knowing by which social experiences are constituted, so that the comprehensibility of social practices can be more planetary. Felipe Cervera reminds us that,

> a planetary framework for performance studies implies doing away with any sense of attributing a locale of performance research the benefit to determine how the disciplinary histories in other locales are foretold.

27 Bruno Latour, "To Modernise or Ecologise: That is the Question," trans. Charis Cussins, in *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millenium,* eds. Bruce Braun and Noel Castree (Routledge, 1998), 220–41.

In turn, this also implies doing away with a totalist and imperialist critique of the field, in order to reveal the nuances, both micro and macro, that shape the critical histories in which performance (translated or else) is embedded.[28]

Performance in the ends is thus imbricated in the socio-political and ecological construction of place, including its interconnections and scales. In this vast overlapping field of bio-cultural (re)production, performance offers a provocative end in itself.

In order to consider a properly planetary performance, a tighter material connection between humanity, technology, and ecology is needed, but also cultural development that considers the indissoluble link between all three. Ailton Krenak cites a disconnection between these categories as an existential concern: "if for a time it was us, the indigenous peoples, who were threatened with the rupture or extinction of the meaning of our life, today we are all facing the imminence of the Earth not supporting our demand."[29] He continues: "this package called humanity is being

28 Felipe Cervera, "Planetary Performance Studies," *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017), https://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/gps-1-1-3/.
29 Krenak, *O amanhã não está à venda,* 4.

MORE GUIDING QUESTIONS

(please read the text and answer below)

What is missing that is OR not written yet, OR still present somewhere in the 'All these realities' or first document? (and <u>why?</u>)

What subthemes, arguments can be developed further? "What kinds of texts are present here?"

What scenes do we* have?

What questions do we* have?

completely detached from this organism that is the Earth, living in a civilizing abstraction that suppresses diversity, denies the plurality of life forms, existences and habits."[30] If greater solidarity is to be achieved in order to thwart an end of ecology, perhaps ecological ends must be employed in theorization of technoculture, and human culture in general. Cultural objects must flow between these currently specialized distinctions of humanity, technology, and ecology. Such flows exist as performances, dammed by anthropocentric divisions which subordinate nature and technology to human productive ends.

ENDING WORLDS

To speak of the end times in the anthropocene or the anthropocene as the end times only works within the paradigm of western modernism and progress (i.e., linearity, teleology of time, the paradigm of growth).[31] Andrew Culp sees these matters as co-constructed and notes that "the Death of this World admits the in-sufficiency of previous attempts to save it and instead

30 Ibid., 44.
31 Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us,* trans. David Fernbach (Verso, 2017).

poses a revolutionary gamble: only by destroying this world will we release ourselves of its problems. This does not mean moving to the moon, but that *we give up on all the reasons given for saving the world.*"[32] Arguably, those very reasons are the reason for the world as it is. What are we claiming to save in saving "the world"? And what has already ended to bring about our current ends?

We have considered the tragedies of human impact when ideas are scaled and the performances of ends that they trigger. While these performances constitute distinct and localized strategies of mourning—from Fukushima and Formosa to the Suez Canal, the flooding river basins, Aboriginal mourning, aquatic death, and the loss of winter—they are also in relation to planetary catastrophe. The scale of solution, of how these countless performances of ends offer paths beyond this Anthropocentric destruction, always requires more work. Performing mourning, staying with the ends, constitutes both a sustained challenge and a change in our relations with one another. We cannot afford to forget these moments, to let them be *just* another story of climate catastrophe. They are performed, and reperformed. In Donna

32 Andrew Culp, *Dark Deleuze* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 66. Italics ours.

Haraway's aptly named *Staying with the Trouble,* she writes, "In the face of such touching silliness about techno fixes (or techno-apocalypses) sometimes it is hard to remember that it remains important to embrace situated technical projects and their people."[33]

In a 2012 report from the UN,[34] Gaza was deemed to become fully uninhabitable by 2020. Even as we discussed this and wrote this in 2022, before the horrors of 2023 and 2024, Gaza was uninhabitable according to UN timelines and epistemologies. Gaza and the West Bank are not metaphors as zones of extreme political embattlement over the notion of inhabitability—and the mobility that is implied and implicated in their cartographies—but rather resist a Eurocentric approach to what a habitat is, and what the "end" means outside of said approach. Palestinians will not leave because of environmental uninhabitability or infrastructural collapse; their insistence on inhabiting the ends is their anticolonial existential resistance. Staying with the ends in Gaza or

---

33 Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 3.

34 United Nations Country Team, "Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?," *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,* August 18, 2012, https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/gaza-2020-liveable-place.

anywhere else in Occupied Palestine is hardly a choice for most Palestinians. Their reality is shaped by inter-generational steadfastness in the face of ongoing and increasingly persuasive colonial domination. Precisely because Palestinians' performances of mourning and reinhabiting the ends are untranslatable outside their embodied geographies of resistance, we cannot afford to forget them.[35] To perform the scalar, planetary, deep-time impact of the Anthropocene, while not giving in to another perilous Eurocentric universalism, urges us to rethink, to retell, to zoom, and to zoom again.

35 A remarkable example of reinhabiting the ends through performance has been carried out by *The Freedom Theater,* a theater school and venue based in Jenin's refugee camp, in the West Bank, dedicated to encouraging cultural resistance to Israel's colonial occupation. It was their work with Playback Theatre, particularly in the context of the Freedom Bus—an initiative inspired by the Freedom Riders of the African-American civil rights movement—that motivated one of us to travel to and through the West Bank during the months of March and April 2016. *The Freedom Theatre,* https://thefreedomtheatre.org/.

DON'T PANIC

8:46 am

Don't panic. Run inside. Think it through. What now? Make breakfast? Get dressed? Call someone? Try to remove the can?

8:48 am

Run outside. Try to remove the can again. But the cat won't let me near it. It reverses, claws, and lets off an almighty howl. Its body quivers beneath the wet hair. Has it been here all night? Is this the luxurious white cat that often brushes by my windowsill?

8:49 am

What a nightmare. Take a photo? No, don't make it a spectacle. Sit down and think it through. Get up and do something. No, stay with the cat.

8:50 am

Call the RSPCA. Good idea. Why didn't I think of it before?

8:51 am

You have called RSPCA Victoria. We are currently closed. For pet adoption refer to our website. To report animal cruelty, press one. If you have a medical emergency for

networks, decolonizing and awakening to a more distributed model of knowing. Performance Studies must engage with this imminently because this is the kind of relationality needed for a more responsive ecoconsciousness.

Are we mourning the end of art, the end of performance?

What is the we that we use when we speak/ think/ write here?

This 'we' is many things. Some of the time it is about this group working on this particular project. Other times, it means an imagined normative collective 'we' of performance theorists and performance practitioners as assembled by and within western academia and western curatorial practices. This is something that performance studies struggles with, it both tries to be open to cultures, canons and practices outside of the Euro-US-centricity model, but it tries to do so from Euro-US-centric epistemes and knowledge production practices.

Are we stuttering?

We, people writing this book, are stuttering together with other billions of humans on this planet, stuttering through this global pandemic, and the far right wing politics of populism, nationalism, borderism and social distance that it has brought on or amplified. We stutter as we see the world as we know change rapidly, fall apart, or be recreated anew. We don't know what to say, write, or do most of the time, between panicking over our own physical wellbeing, health, rights to health care, the right to privacy and to choice, and to our security. This stutter shapes a lot the writing process. We come against many hurdles, and there is no manual on how to handle them, to cross over or to dismantle them. We do not share the same tools, languages or formative political experiences, which is seen as a radical contrast to the seemingly monolithic and normative experience of working in a western academy that deals with the humanities, or with performance studies specifically. We do not live in the same world, as Bruno Latour would say. Yet, it has been easier to thematise this and topically deal with it, than to structurally address what this means academically and curatorially, especially as these regimes of power engage with the living body and its aesthetic manifestations

---

Nilüfer Gros
Nov 10, 2020

I really think we should be clear about what it means to decolonize, what are we decolonizing and how?
https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630
This is the article: Decolonization is not a metaphor

Malin Palani
Nov 11, 2020

I agree. thank you for the article!

Nilüfer Gros
Nov 10, 2020

I guess we need to finish this thought. So what are we doing about it? How are we opposing to this?

Nilüfer Gros
Nov 10, 2020

I'm not sure we are stuttering. I'm not sure we don't know what to say or write. Aren't we more like drowning

your pet, press two. For information regarding bushfire support, press three. To hear these options again press zero.

Two.

You are being transferred to our Medical Emergency Team.
Every beat of my heart. We got something going on. Tender love is blind. It requires a dedication. All this love we feel needs no conversation. We ride it together, huh hah. Making love with each other, huh hah.

9:03 am
We are currently experiencing a high number of calls. Please hold or call back at another time.

Islands in the stream. That is what we are. No one in between. How can we be wrong. Sail away with me. To another world.

9:04 am
We are currently experiencing a high number of calls. Please hold or call back at another time.

And we rely on each other, huh hah.

9:09 am

Medical Emergency Team. How can we assist?
Hi. Um. I've found a cat in my backyard and its head
is trapped inside a cat food tin can.
Which area are you in? What Council are you under?
Moreland.
*Call this after hours number and they may be able to help
you. Have you got a pen?*
Yes.
9354 377 888.
9354 377 888.
Correct.
Thank you.
Goodbye.

9:30 am

Moreland City Council.
The RSPCA said I should call you. I have a stray cat in
my yard that has its head trapped inside a can.
A can?
A cat food can.
Really?
Yes.
Serious?
Yes.
A cat food can?
Yes. A Whiskers cat food can.

Have you tried to get it out?
Yes, but it's stuck. And the cat is really stressed. It's been out in the rain all night.
Where is it?
In my backyard.
Is it your cat?
No, it's not.
Do you know whose cat it is?
No, I don't.
Well, have you called the RSPCA? I'll give you their number.
I called them and they said to call you. They can't do anything.
Alright. Let's see. I've got some numbers here. Stray or lost cat? Sick or injured cat? Cat registration? Cats boarding home. Nuisance pet? Annual Pet Parade. Which one is it?
Sick or injured.
Got it. What's your address?
208 Wellington Street, Coburg.
Where's the cat?
Same address. In the backyard.
And what is it exactly? A cat with a cat food tin on its head?
Yes, its head is stuck inside the tin.
Someone will call you.
Thank you.
Bye.

9:42 am

More coffee. How did I get landed with this? It's not my cat and it's not my problem. I don't need this drama. The Council can deal with it. No, I can't hand-ball the situation. Gotta take responsibility. Try harder. What if I was the cat and someone handballed me to the Council? How would I feel?

9:45 am

Make toast. Refocus. Check the cat. Set it free. No, I can't do it. The howls, the breathing. It's all too much. Where's the Council when I need them?

Who Is Down the Hall?

Lately, one of us has been thinking of a comment from a peer reviewer. The piece under review examined collaborative writing across distance and institutions. The reviewer asked, not uncritically, "Don't you have colleagues down the hall?," perhaps implying that the need to work and collaborate with others across great distances was more of an affected position than anything else. This occurred before the current pandemic, wherein many of our hallways have been closed and our colleagues, friends, and family found only on screens and speakers.

The interaction might come to mind, precisely because when the project of this book began in the midst of the pandemic, many of us quite literally did not have colleagues down the hall anymore. But as members of a field that contains few departments

specifically devoted to our discipline of performance studies, there is an ongoing desire to collaborate with fellow scholars to discover, assess, and create new methodologies and ways of seeing the act of performance making. We know, for instance, that we have colleagues in our field who find themselves as the lone performance studies scholar in an academic unit, and performance studies scholars and artists regularly seek new ways of working across institutions. Perhaps then, it is not surprising that such attempts to connect have been underway even before the pandemic. As Felipe Cervera and Eero Laine note in an article on collaborative performance studies published prior to COVID-19:

Our everyday is marked by new methodologies and definitions of collaboration, which are facilitated by digital technologies as they rely on performance studies practices and scholarship to inform an ethos of work. Our colleagues are both just down the hallway at our respective institutions or organizations, and they are also on other continents, accessible only by video chat, shared documents, and social media. The immediate work of the everyday is marked by collaborative possibilities that are mediated and require a shared sense

of labor and common understandings of performance studies as a practice and a field.[1]

This shared labor and field of study is both of our institutions and beyond them. We work and mourn at a scale that is necessarily local and physically tied to our homes and workplaces and, like the ends we face, more planetary.

It can be joyful and at the same time worrying to find that for the past years, we have experienced each other more as colleagues in writing this book than we have our colleagues down the—empty—hallways. This book comes out of a scattered planetary collaboration wherein—due to, thanks to, or despite the pandemic—we created a space for ourselves within which we can meet, think, discuss, and write together. Despite our shared investigation of the ends and mourning, the work has been quite cheerful. Although, from another perspective, it is also quite disconcerting. It certainly is not only the pandemic that deactivated collaboration down the hallway, but rather the pandemic merely made it more acute. If we find collaboration, solidarity, and collegiality across

1   Felipe Cervera and Eero Laine, "The Planet, Everyday: Towards Collaborative Performance Studies," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2020): 90–91.

Before the next meeting: Please contribute to a collaboratively-written 500 word abstract and add 3-5 references to our shared bibliography.

the planet more easily than at our home institutions, if a Zoom portal opens more readily than the office next door, that means something is deeply wrong with how these institutions function. A university, college, or academy hallway has come to resemble rather an archipelago of islands, where each individual is trying to make ends meet, or some are even seeking to dominate and expand their sphere of influence, making work and life in these solitary and individual pursuits nearly impossible and barely livable.

INSTITUTIONAL BRICKS AND CRITIQUES

Institutions, their porosity or lack thereof, and our relations and affiliations in and beyond the walls of the institution are fraught sites. Institutions can both facilitate a living with the ends and facilitate the ends, even as financial crises seem to put many institutions themselves at their own ends. Institutions mark the differential violence and suffering involved in these epistemological connections. For Giorgio Agamben "the categories and institutions that we have inherited from our political tradition have been emptied of their meaning by contemporary biopolitics, and yet continue to live a spectral afterlife through their hold on

our political imagination."[2] Together, here, we are not an institution, yet the scale of institutions and what they sustain and what they exclude are on our minds as immediate interfaces and, indeed, complications among the ends.

As scholars and creatives with independent practices, we understand we must grapple with the pressures towards the traditional singularity of authorship—deans love superstars, artistic directors celebrate auteurs, and genius is assumed to be singular—but at this moment we are individuals thinking together and writing collectively. The words in this paragraph, on this page, are the amalgamation of multiple voices. Horizontal knowledge production is often defined against institution hierarchies, yet we have been in some way supported by institutions, even as we consider them mournfully. We are all, or have been, connected—sometimes tethered, sometimes kept at distance—to various institutional structures, and carry specific relations and histories within their hierarchies and norms. Our different positions in relation to the institution—struggling from both inside and outside—inform this critique.

2   Richard Bailey, Daniel McLoughlin, and Jessica Whyte, "Editors' Introduction: Form-of-Life: Giorgio Agamben, Ontology and Politics," *Theory & Event 13*, no. 1 (2010).

Our ends are interwoven through our institutions. The precarity of work inside and alongside institutions has been key to many questions in performance and performance studies. Performance artist and writer Andrea Fraser argues: "It's not a question of being against the institution. [...] It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of rewards we aspire to. Because the critique of the institution demands we ask, above all, of ourselves."[3] The investment in challenging institutional norms that build and sustain the walls which prevent many (most) from inhabiting—and changing—academic structures is pertinently described by the writer and scholar Sara Ahmed.[4] Ahmed explains this through the materiality of the institutional brick wall.[5] While walls might appear to be stationary, the mechanisms which prevent movement are active and will move as required to keep certain bodies in place.

One prominent example of impediment to change within academic walls is citational practice, which for

3   Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," *Art Forum* 44, no. 1 (2005): 105.

4   Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Duke University Press, 2017).

5   Ibid., 105–6.

Ahmed sustains sexism and racism when drawing on the repeated and accepted citations of the same institutional powers. Citations are bricks sustaining academic walls—including the naming of academic buildings. As Ahmed explains:

> An institution typically refers to a persistent structure or mechanism of social order governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given community. So when I am saying that white men is an institution, I am referring not only to what has already been instituted or built but the mechanisms that ensure the persistence of that structure.[6]

The regulative norms that shape normative conduct demand, therefore, a conscious effort to resist leaning on their inheritance. That is, "Once something has been reproduced, you do not need to intend its reproduction. You have to do more not to reproduce whiteness than not to intend to reproduce whiteness."[7] Stopping the violent performance of repetition is an ethical, willful act of responsibility and care. Such work entails not only an acknowledgment of the sedimented histories of exclusion, but also a

6   Ibid., 152–53.
7   Ibid., 150.

joint effort to push against those epistemological and ontological walls of separation.

Institutions thus demand critique across different fields and contexts, it seems, even as they readily absorb it and redirect it. Our concern here with institutionalism and institutional critique stems from particular questions in visual and performance art and performance studies that probe the very possibility of critique from within and outside of institutions, which themselves often sustain and fund the artists making such critiques. Alexander Alberro's essay, "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique," skillfully brings to question what is constituted by the inside and outside of the institution and how it has become a much more intricate question. One important takeaway from the text is that the institution is already internalized by its performers. In the attempt by performers and artists to escape institutionalism and institutionalization, they have "brought more of the world into it."[8] When the world itself is being institutionalized and there is no clear divide between in and out, it comes as no surprise that "the underlying relations of power

8 Alexander Alberro, "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique," in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (MIT Press, 2009), 14.

remain the same."[9] Academia is a cyclone of constant negotiation: "capital's involvement in the University operates through constant feedback cycles that shift between phases of conflict, struggle, co-optation, and disciplinary integration."[10] To help chart a course out of this academic cyclone, we embrace uncertainty, unknowing, and mourning as avenues through which to rethink our work in and beyond our institutions. We write this with an understanding that the managerial notion of embracing instability and risk without further critique can be problematic because in many ways that is what capital, which shapes institutional and individualized violence, demands us to do. Still, there is a creative freedom, perhaps fleeting, in moving collectively towards uncertain and experimental criticality in a space that attempts to be or feels somehow outside an institution.

Performing arts curator Marta Keil also poses well-situated questions around institutionalism and institutional critique in "What is the Purpose of Institutional Critique Today?," where she asks, "with institutions

9   Ibid., 14.
10 Isaac Kamola and Eli Meyerhoff, "Creating Commons: Divided Governance, Participatory Management, and Struggles against Enclosure in the University," *Polygraph* 21 (2009): 6.

under threat and in need of defense, how is one to survey them critically?"[11] Described elsewhere as "new institutionalism," curators, administrators, and artists avoid inhabiting a position of institutionalism while trying to defend and keep open the institutions; such processes are ultimately self-serving.[12] Keil observes that "another recurring argument is that critical analysis of institutional practices is an esoteric and self-referential occupation, benefiting nothing and no one except its own object and subject."[13] As noted by Alberro, by interrogating the blurred institutional lines and what is considered "in" and "out," a theorist would not be only concerned with institutionalism and the institution, but also with "de-institutionalization": "performativeness is at the core of how the art world works. Art is a dynamic system, never capable of fully constituting itself; a kind of order in which moments of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization overlap constantly."[14] Perhaps we don't need to bomb

---

11   Marta Keil, "What Is the Purpose of Institutional Critique Today?," trans. Joanna Blachnio, *Polish Theatre Journal* 1–2, nos. 3–4 (2017): 4.

12   Lucie Kolb and Gabriel Flückiger, "New Institutionalism Revisited," *On Curating* 21 (2014): 5–17.

13   Keil, "What Is the Purpose of Institutional Critique Today?," 4.

14   Ibid.

Lately, I* find myself thinking with some frequency of a comment from a peer reviewer. The piece under review was a thinking through of collaborative writing across distance and institutions. The reviewers asked, not uncritically: 'Don't you have colleagues down the hall?'. This was before the current pandemic, wherein many of our* hallways have been closed and our* colleagues, friends, and family found only on screens and speakers. I* think it might come to mind now, precisely because I* don't have colleagues down the hall anymore.

Our work has been shaped and even facilitated by the pandemic, but our* work does not need a pandemic to work. Or does it? We, the people writing this book, are stuttering together with other billions of humans on this planet, stuttering through this global pandemic, and the far right wing politics of populism, nationalism, borderism and social distance that it has brought on or amplified. we* stutter as we* see the world as we* know change rapidly, fall apart, or be recreated anew. we* don't know what to say, write, or do most of the time, between panicking over our* own physical wellbeing,

31

health, rights to health care, the right to privacy and to choice, and to our* security. This stutter shapes a lot of the writing process. we* come against many hurdles, and there is no manual on how to handle them, to cross over or to dismantle them. we* do not share the same tools, languages or formative political experiences, which is seen as a radical contrast to the seemingly monolithic and normative experience of working in a western

---

jan
Apr 23, 2021

note to *:
what is the urgency behind the question of 'institutions' right now? How to connect it stronger to 'ends', to other topics of the book?

jan
Apr 23, 2021

examples:
situation of (especially live) arts in times of covid-19

Eero Laine
Apr 23, 2021

Feel free to write towards this directly in the document

jan
Apr 23, 2021

note to self*, extended:
- what institutions? (academic, artistic, political?)
- why now?
- how does that affect whom (artists, nonhumans, academic workers, society?)

the institution, but rather locate a new position for performance.

Here, we pursue collective writing as a "de-institutionalizing" practice, a task of immense proportions, yet engaged here as reaching beyond and through institutional walls. Of course, such gestures are both readily captured by the institution and hold the potential to provoke shifts in performing and enabling different kinds of institutions. Keil asks: "How far could one go in setting an institution into a fragile, unpredictable and open mode of instituting, ready to answer anytime on social and political urgencies?"[15] How might we actively empty the halls of our institutions and still pursue our work and writing and art?

We're aware, of course, of the gambit here because the move towards flexible de-institutionalized labor is widespread. Management hails us with the mantras "Embrace Change" and "Change is the new Normal."[16] Be flexible or perish? There is no time to mourn the ends, they tell us. Keil voices how this

---

15 Marta Keil, "The Practice of Listening to What Is Not There Yet," *Flanders Art Institute,* May 5, 2020, https://www.kunsten.be/en/now-in-the-arts/the-practice-of-listening-to-what-is-not-there-yet/.

16 Jan Bruce, "Change Is the New Normal: How Will You Handle It?," *Forbes,* September 5, 2018, https://www.forbes.com/

future looks: "And there we have, in condensed form, the features shaping the status of the contemporary freelancer, a worker who pays for the illusion of her independence with being constantly switched on and ready for a career change, forever chasing new projects that could grant her at least bare subsistence (which, if they come to fruition, usually fail to meet even that basic requirement)."[17] The joy of being free and flexible comes with the price that you must be free and flexible all the time and even as the world ends.

Who needs the institution anymore, when scholars and artists have become walking and talking self-institutionalizing promotional agents themselves? Check our KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). We're open 24/7. Institutions are welcome to call anytime. Chat. Zoom. Insta. Facebook. Message us. Endless deadlines—ends without endings or endings without ends. What kind of practices do we enact? How do we perform beyond ourselves, beyond defending our-selves, beyond protecting and repeating ourselves? As a collective of performers, artists, dancers, curators, dramaturges, researchers, writers, and academics from different parts of the world, we have joked

sites/janbruce/2018/09/05/change-is-the-new-normal-how-will-you-handle-it/.

17   Keil, "What Is the Purpose of Institutional Critique Today?," 4.

somewhat ironically that if we were a corporation we might boast of hundreds of years of experience in the field. But we are not a corporation and do not share an institution. And we like to think the work and labor of thinking and writing together is not immediately captured in the logic of the entrepreneur. Of course, it is never that simple.[18]

Thus, these matters are pervasive in the arts and humanities as we experience them today. The conditions exist because they have been built on institutional and citational norms that push us further towards any number of ends and diminish the collaborative and collective possibilities within and beyond the walls of the institutions. The entrepreneurial self celebrated by the institution is most often found in the role of single author or artist, the individual researcher, but perhaps it has never been entirely independent or insular, and is rather a product of the institutions it works within or with.

Contrary to the mirage of self-reliance, the humanities researcher as entrepreneurial self has only

---

18 Or as Kevin Brown, Felipe Cervera, Kyoko Iwaki, Eero Laine, and Kristof van Baarle note "working with is sometimes just a euphemism for working for." Kevin Brown et al., "Antemortem: Collaborative Research in Theatre and Performance Studies," *Global Performance Studies* 4, no. 2 (2021).

become more dependent on institutions. Indeed, Karmenlara Ely reminds us of the persistent institutional myth of the singular creator:

> Our institutions are haunted by Modernity, deeply hungover from its fantasy, which arguably began over 500 years ago. Artist as genius is really the artist as appropriator, artist as pioneer, as mapmaker, artist as explorer, masked. The archetypes of the modernist genius, the solo inventor, the cowboy on the horizon, artist as brand, have constructed us together, America and Europe. Both continents are intertwined precariously with the rest of the world through a shared economy built out of slave labor, genocide and trade of stimulant and people. The artist, when imagined as hero, genius, messiah, hipster—is doomed, against their own best interest, to repeat colonizing gestures.[19]

Deconstructing the notion of Modernity's singular "Man" as the author who measures and masters all things, the same Man that brought the sixth mass extinction and who wants to populate Mars and who

19 Karmenlara Ely, "Against Cultural Appropriation," *Black Box Theatre Publication,* 2017, 29, https://www.blackbox.no/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AgainstCulturalAppropriation_KarmenlaraEly.pdf.

will also write brilliant poetry that captures the affect of the moment, and also the same Man that some of us perhaps unavoidably carry with them and that we also seek to render inoperative. We may or may not have colleagues down the hall, but the institution prefers that we compete with each other. Individual authors or artists will always benefit the institution because the institution is made to benefit from them.

THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY?

9:52 am

Hello.

Hey mate, it's Matt from the Council. I hear you've got a problem with a cat.

Yes, that's right. There's a cat in my backyard. I know this sounds crazy, but it has a tin can on its head. It's stuck.

Can you get it off?

No, I've tried. It's really fierce and clawing me. It's traumatised. And so am I.

Hmm. Is it your cat?

No, I found it in my yard this morning and by the looks of it, it's been there all night in the rain with the can on its head.

Hmm. So where are you? Actually, I've got all that. It's not my shift, I'm about to finish, but I'll swing by and have a look.
Thank you.
Catch you soon, mate.

10:05 am
Take vitamins. Whose cat is it? It must belong to someone. I'll ask Pat, she'll know.

10:16 am
What is it?
There's a cat in my yard with a tin on its head.
I haven't got my hearing aid in so you will have to shout.
THERE'S A CAT IN MY YARD WITH A TIN ON ITS HEAD.
A WHAT?
A TIN
A WHAT?
A TIN CAN
A TIN CAN?
A CAT HAS ITS HEAD STUCK INSIDE A CAT FOOD TIN.
YOUR CAT?
NO. A WHITE ONE. DO YOU KNOW WHO OWNS A WHITE CAT AROUND HERE?
No. Do you know your neighbor is in hospital at the moment?
No.

Angina.
Oh, that's no good. So do you know whose cat it is?
Does Annemarie have a white cat?
Hers are gray. Maybe behind you. On the corner.
Which house?
Behind you. I thought you were the guy coming to take my pup for a walk.
I've called the Council and they are coming to help.
WHAT?
THE COUNCIL ARE COMING.
WHY DON'T YOU CALL THE RSPCA?
I DID, BUT THEY COULDN'T HELP AND GAVE ME THE COUNCIL'S NUMBER.
I got locked out yesterday.
Oh, what happened?
Gate stuck.
Must be the weather.
No, it was the latch.
I wish they would hurry up.
Had to go next door and ask them to open it for me.
Oh.
Where is it, the cat?
In my backyard.
Look at this gate. Dry rot. Bloody neighbors. I'll never use their recommendations again.
Oh, here he is. The Council. Gotta go.

10:22 am

Hi, you the one with the cat?

Yep, that's me.

Where is it?

In the backyard.

I'll get my gear.

Your vehicle is like a police van.

Ha, kinda. Ok, let's see it.

It's under the tree.

Geez. Never seen anything like this. I've seen cats trapped in trees and drains but never, ever seen anything like this.

What will you do? I've tried to wedge its head out, but it won't budge. Now she's gone wild. Scratching me and everything.

Wild alright. That's probably what she is.

What are you going to do?

I'm just here to exercise a duty of care. I'll have it taken away.

Where to?

Vet probably.

Which one?

Brunswick probably. Or the CPS.

Huh?

The Cat Protection Society. They'll probably sedate her, can't do much with her as she is. Not like a dog, these things go wild. Ballistic.

What will they do, put her to sleep and wedge the can off?

Probably just put her down actually.

What? Put her down?

I'll pick her up with this net and take her down there.

But I rang the RSPCA and they said you could help.

I'm just here to take her away. By the time they inject her and fix her up it's not worth it. It's bloody expensive and the Council is not going to foot the bill.

What if someone owns it? If it's someone's pet?

It's probably a stray. Why else would it be eating out of a can?

Isn't there more you can do?

And bet it hasn't got a microchip. Let me look after it, mate.

Can you let me know how it all goes?

Well, if you ring the Council, they can tell you.

Ok.

Contribute ~2,000 words that synthesize and clarify a particular point or set of points.

Aim to write a cohesive piece that synthesizes and/or expands upon a topic, building directly from our shared texts. This writing should include references with the goal of contributing to the final book project. Feel free to paste work from other documents here and deepen and expand. If you can find connections to the work of others here, make those connections.

Some will be drafting work here as it develops, while others might opt to paste in a finished piece, once ready.

COMMONING THE ENDS

The recent past has reshaped our notion of institutions, made acute the ecological ends we face, and left us to realize the various solitary histories of art and scholarship. As institutions have historically stratified inequality, and performers and artists bring these strata with them beyond institutional walls, we necessarily face a dilemma. Coming together as this ad-hoc collective, we are initiated by a genuine response to an unprecedented situation, an inner need, perhaps even a necessity to mourn together. We are looking for institutions that allow practices of commoning as an answer to the isolation and precarity of the single-author-as-entrepreneurial-self. Commoning allows collectives to take shape, and we wonder whether our practice of collaborative writing could be such an instance of commoning that challenges the institutions we are moving in and around.

While numeric plurality does not imply pluralism (i.e., difference linked to "new" places and multiple identities), it can encourage and help sustain it. For plurality can nourish the "commoning" of pluralistic, inclusive values by means of collaborative approaches to the performance of writing. This invitation to a pluri-vocal mode of knowledge production starts with

a refusal to see oneself separate from others; as Silvia Federici argues,

> if "commoning" has any meaning, it must be the production of ourselves as a common subject. This is how we must understand the slogan "no commons without community." [...] Community as a quality of relations, a principle of cooperation and responsibility: to each other, the earth, the forests, the seas, the animals.[20]

Mourning as a shared practice, as a collaborative process, is a way of enduring and writing through the painful mess of transformation that mourning otherwise forces upon us individually. Performance studies help us as a form of "commoning" our means of knowledge production. Federici calls for the "production of 'commoning' practices, starting with new collective forms of reproduction, confronting the divisions that have been planted among us along the lines of race, gender, age, and geographical location."[21] In contrast to capital's production and exploitation of enclosures, privatization, and individualization, the production of commons, of shared

20 Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (PM Press, 2012), 145.
21 Ibid., 12.

practices of responsibility and care, can pave the way for the creation of counter-hegemonic meanings and values. The resulting "commoning" of values seems crucial for reflecting on our and this book's mode of engagement with collective knowledge production.

Through commoning practices of collaborative writing, the self begins to open to plurality, and the self becomes shared—perhaps even sharable. From this standpoint, where community is viewed as a quality of relations and as means of production of shared practices of responsibility and care, collaborative writing might produce values embedded in collaborative ends. Collaboration, seen as a site of connection—a place adjacent to and overlapping with other places and multiple other spatial, material, and socio-cultural networks—serves as a territory for the production of common value practices. To this end, and through the intersection and exchange of collaborators' subjective and embodied experiences, collaborative writing becomes a sustained performance of interconnectedness, akin to the "unproductive potentiality'' of living among the ends. Such meeting of ends, in turn, and the aesthetic dimension of commonism[22] as an

22 See Nico Dockx and Pascal Gielen, eds., *Commonism: A New Aesthetics of the Real* (Valiz, 2018).

ideology is a catalyst to the "commoning" of values
and work and the possibility of other ends.

The urgency of the call to commoning lies in
institutional crises, but as our discussion of ecolo-
gies points out, commoning is also in response to
an existential concern along vastly differing scales.
Discipline and disciplining, and the institutional walls
they uphold, can serve to obfuscate the shared sense
of vulnerability and attachments. If the arts and
humanities have too much relied on the singular voice
of those allowed through the gates of the institution,
those voices have also been amplified by sitting atop
specialized sites.

Syrian performance theorist Ziad Adwan argues
that we cannot study the divisions within theater in the
Arabic speaking region without studying the relations
between theater practitioners and the nation-state
project and European colonialism.[23] Ben Spatz
reminds us that "divisions between theatre, dance,
and music have never made much sense outside the
Eurocentric canon."[24] These divisions that affirm

---

23 Ziad Adwan, "Imaginary Theatre: Professionalising Theatre in
the Levant 1940–1990," *Journal of Global Theatre History* 3, no.
1 (2019): 3.

24 Ben Spatz, *Blue Sky Body: Thresholds for Embodied Research*
(Routledge, 2020), 246.

specialized roles in the making of a performance or theater piece and distribute those roles to single authors or authorities of differentiated aesthetic aspects replicate colonial cultural categories and reproduce those same divisions and hierarchies. Spatz adds, "European history remains implicitly centered as long as 'world dance' refers back to 'dance,' 'ethnomusicology' back to 'musicology,' and performance studies back to 'theatre.'"[25] Making such divisions is much like appropriating subaltern cultures' performative methods without understanding the context from which they originate.

As opposed to many arts and humanities disciplines, some sciences are highly collaborative and allow for publications by numerous authors, working across time and space, between labs, and in multiple languages. For instance, large research teams at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, often produce papers with hundreds or even thousands of co-authors.[26] Yet, the labs, which theater and performance have tried to emulate at times, very

---

25 Ibid., 248.

26 See, for example, Emily Demarco, "Physics Paper Sets Record with More than 5000 Authors," *Nature*, May 18, 2015, https://www.science.org/content/article/physics-paper-sets-record-more-5000-authors.

often replicate the structures of funding and of power in which they are situated. This is not to repeat the various and sometimes ill-advised critiques of science and scientific knowledge from the 1990s theory wars, but rather to point to the fact that certain knowledge is organized in ways that reveal the underlying or overlaying ideologies of the field.

Even as an emergent field (when compared to some sciences and social sciences, for instance), performance studies has not fully embraced a collaborative ethos, instead becoming readily folded into traditional institutional methods associated with Enlightenment humanities research that reward the individualized author[27] and, for the most part, recreate a model of scholarship that remains dominated

---

27 This distinguishes the humanities from the field of the natural sciences for whom working, researching, and writing collaboratively—although in a very different manner—is an institutional necessity, given not only the different research methodology (such as laboratory work) but also eventually a differently perceived ontology of the object that is being researched. See, for instance, Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton University Press, 1986), and K. Brad Wray, "The Epistemic Significance of Collaborative Research," *Philosophy of Science* 69, no. 1 (2002): 150–68.

by the Western canon and its epistemologies and methodologies. That so much of the work in theater, performance studies, critical theory, and the arts and humanities more broadly is based on the singular work of individuals should give us pause.

The humanities might benefit from massively authored research, like that produced in the context of CERN, where many scholars examine one idea closely, disagree, find consensus, qualify their responses in relation to each other, etc. The discursive territory which opens from our exchanges, interjections, and interruptions as we write this book helps us to think beyond the personal and subjective, and as Karl Marx argues in *Theses on Feuerbach,* we are defining our positions in our world from "the ensemble of the social relations."[28] An intersubjective territory opens a new ground in which our relations produce something beyond ourselves. While this is not the ontologically stable research object observed in CERN, our discur-

---

28 Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy,* ed. Lewis S. Feuer (Anchor Books, 1959), 244. See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Penguin, 2004); and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Belknap Press, 2009).

appropriator, artist as pioneer, as mapmaker, artist as explorer, masked. The archetypes of the modernist genius, the solo inventor, the cowboy on the horizon, artist as brand, have constructed us together, America and Europe. Both continents are intertwined precariously with the rest of the world through a shared economy built out of slave labor, genocide and trade of stimulant and people. The artist, when imagined as hero, genius, messiah, hipster-- is doomed, against their own best interest, to repeat colonizing gestures."[1]

Institutions thus highlight and rely on the ....? while the individual relies on and builds upon the work of others. In 2021, notions of democracy are being eroded by collective activism. How do we navigate this binary in a way that allows us to discuss this isolating ethos and practices? Recognising the multiple positions of subjectivity, embracing the uncertainty of collaborative interaction, where the future/ends are uncertain. Embracing instability and risk. Embracing the collective voice – when it is not who speaks, but

8

---

[1] Karmenlara Ely, Against Cultural Appropriation, Black Box tester, Publication 0, page 29.

what, where and how they speak. Allowing for change and an openness to multiple meanings and diverse interpretations.

Here, we ask plainly: Have we reached the end of the singular author? Have we reached

Malin Palani
Nov 11, 2020

We've at times used the word "singular" and at other times used "individual." There needs to be more specificity around the use of these terms. In particular, there's a lot of scholarship on "singularization" and "resingularization" including Deleuze and Guattari, Badiou, and Foucault who use these terms. In brief, singularization in D/G relates to emergence (the actualization of the virtual) and in Foucault it's something like the historically-situated production of subjectivities in their complexity. So, there's a difference between singular and single (numerical), singular and individual. I think singularity has more to do with complexity than with individuality or with the perspective of an ego-oriented one (either of the author or of the institution).

Juliana Moraes
Nov 8, 2020

There are moments in the text in which the denial of the singular author does exist. Therefore, we should on

sive territory still permits an externality. There are productive ontologically *un*stable spaces to open and explore, between the intersubjective relations of artists and theorists.[29] A common space is opened outside of an institutional framework, where authors interact and intra-act, developing and defining the commons.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the sparse amount of collaborative scholarship in performance studies is that collaborative methodologies are not widely practiced or demonstrated in the field—this despite the fact that many collaborative methodologies are at work in performance practice. We think collective work (and our current writing is an example of this) is a site where we can create (perform) alongside each other or others to establish more generous and generative collectivities. To be precise, our collaboration does not

---

29 To this point Félix Guattari argues the instability of subjectivity even further in *The Three Ecologies:* "Vectors of subjectification do not necessarily pass through the individual, which in reality appears to be something like a 'terminal' for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines, etc. Therefore, interiority establishes itself at the crossroads of multiple components, each relatively autonomous in relation to the other, and, if need be, in open conflict." Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies,* trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (Athlone Press, 2000), 36.

only entail adding together opinions manifested by numerous single authors; rather, we interfere in each other's words and sentences, amalgamate, combine, merge, subtract, intermingle, rearrange, and incorporate ideas. We cut and regroup in collaboration, editing in real time. But such practices, while they may seem obvious in description (just write together!), are, as we continue to note, really, strikingly far from common.

Writing about shared authorship in the arts and humanities in 1990, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede consider the idea that authorship is often construed "as not only commonsensical but also somehow inevitable."[30] They trace authorship as it is perceived as a wholly singular activity from the European middle ages, arguing along the way that "the history of the concept of authorship cannot be separated from the evolution of authorship as a profession."[31] That is, authorship has been understood in this constraining way, in large part due to its perceived power and prestige, as the ability to literally write history, in order to be valued enough to be paid for your written

30 Lisa S. Ede and Andrea A. Lunsford, *Singular Texts / Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 77.

31 Ibid., 80.

thoughts. The genealogy of the singular genius of modernity, holding specialized skills and knowledge, is marked from the artist and the scholar to the entrepreneur. In a way, the link from the "genius" of modernity to author as a "brand" indicates how the idea of a singular author is deeply entangled with a capitalist mode of knowledge production. The inevitable outcome of institutions built on "solitary" work is never actually done alone, despite what the byline implies. Such work will continue to replicate itself, to pile up, to institutionalize itself, unless it is made strange. And isn't it strange that in the arts and humanities we so rarely think and study and write and research and, importantly, publish with our colleagues, whether they are down the hall or across the planet?[32] And yet, processes have emerged. Perhaps the legitimacy of the work to be produced, regardless of disciplinary

---

32 Stevphen Shukaitis and Joanna Figiel take André Breton's declaration that "One publishes to find comrades" as a way of considering publication as "working towards establishing conditions for the co-production of meaning." Stevphen Shukaitis and Joanna Figiel, "Publishing to Find Comrades: Constructions of Temporality and Solidarity in Autonomous Print Cultures," *Lateral* 8, no. 2 (2019), https://cslateral.org/issue/8-2/publishing-comrades-temporality-solidarity-autonomous-print-cultures-shukaitis-figiel/.

belonging, now lies in performance studies' exigency of a relationality. There are methodologies that develop across the work and in various cohorts of those working in performance studies.[33] The work is underway, and this book is another example of it.

As we write this book from different subject-positions, we do not share the same stories. We do not experience the same places and times. But even more important in understanding the "we" deployed even on this page: we do not share the same perspective on the different, often conflicting realities we are facing in our everyday lives that necessarily shape our work. But we agree enough to share these words. That is even more true as we write this text in the ends, in a time that highlights both the possibility of people finding new ways of being and doing together, and the fact of how social, cultural, linguistic, and ecological differences are easily turned into political and economical inequalities.

But our collective authorship is not a mask, an anonymous group we can hide behind. It is an amplification of the self, a socialization of the otherwise solo academic practices we learn in our various institu-

---

33 See, for instance, Felipe Cervera et al., "Thicker States," *GPS: Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017), http://gps.psi-web. org/issue-1-1/thicker-states/.

tions. This collective neither manages to truly hide our identity nor does it provide a fully different, new one. Traversing a melange of styles and content, we create the dramatis personae, a protagonist, a stand-in for our common writing in lack of a better, a more suitable expression, knowing that theater, performance, and fiction may be yet the best we can get. Necessarily, our work is academic, descriptive, narrative, and poetic; it is a work (of writing) done as style. As Susan Sontag claims, "There are no style-less works of art, only works of art belonging to different, more or less complex stylistic traditions and conventions."[34] That being said, the author of our text—the collaborative author, a group of situated individuals, brought forward as a "we"—cannot be less than a function of a literary style, with its epistemological and political implications deriving not in opposition to, but out of a text's stylistic setting as its fundamental aesthetic operation.

TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP

Like others in performance studies, we wonder how it might be possible to undo some of the often troubling

---

34 Susan Sontag, "On Style," in *Against Interpretation: And Other Essays* (Dell Publishing, 1966), 27.

EVEN MORE GUIDING QUESTIONS

(please read the text and answer below)

What paths might resonate with a reader?

What meditations are possible?

What possible structures of 'a' book do we* see laying dormant in these materials?

Are there 'essential' bits, favourite parts? What do you want to do with the texts?

histories of the academy—to take down the walls that have been built or to more easily traverse them or even to exist in some liminal state of being both of and not the institution.[35] Can the academy and its institutions shift in ways towards collectivity—towards a collaborative mourning, planetary ends, or even another future? Or can we come to terms with seemingly being compelled to collaborate, to work together, in the face of pandemics and ecological disaster? We ask these questions now because they are pressing, but also because they have not been fully explored in our field.

The progressive potential of collective, transdisciplinary authorship is one step towards moving beyond the dominance of the "white men institution," as Ahmed defines it, in performance studies' practice and study. Nonetheless, as *After Performance,* a performance studies authorial collective, is keen to emphasize, "we also work in relation to a field that has gained capital through celebrating—even reifying—its own projected radicality and undisciplined praxes."[36]

---

35 This notion is in many ways central to questions of performance studies as a field and discipline, especially in the vein of performance studies that might be considered as affiliated with PSi.

36 After Performance Working Group, "Vulnerability and the Lonely Scholar," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 27, no. 2

For *After Performance,* their practice of "Trans-author-ship" fosters authors who resonate with one another and who publish together as a collective. "Trans-authorship" attests to an experience of "trans-mutating" beyond the "boundaried" authorial self as they work towards moments of transparency, transmission, and the transit—the circulatory movements—of ideas and the collectives they emerge from. Collaborative authorship might be a practice in dismantling the Enlightenment myths of individual sovereignty and deconstructing the idea of "Man."

At the same time, collectivity is not simply a neutral force for good and can be leveraged in different ways in our time of ends. For some of us, adopting a collaborative approach to artistic and intellectual practice, academic or otherwise, is a choice that reinforces a particular need and desire for together-ness, connection, and care.[37] The emphasis on

(2017), https://www.contemporarytheatrereview.org/2017/vulnerability-and-the-lonely-scholar/.

37 Renata Cernadas Gaspar, "On the Role of Friendship in Artistic Collaboration: Personal Notes on the Future of Work," *Owela–The Future of Work,* May 2, 2019, https://issuu.com/owela/docs/owela_publication/26, and Shawn Chua et al., "Theatre Essentials in Three Acts: Collaboration, Care, Time," *Theatre Topics* 31, no. 2 (2021): 99–111.

interconnectedness mirrors Claire MacDonald's view that "Collaboration connects, it does not and cannot resolve. It is the question, rather than the answer."[38] Yet, the connectedness that collaboration brings about can simultaneously be question and answer; it can be part of an idea of questioning as a form of collectively experiencing, reading, and interpreting the socio-spatial relationships at stake. Understanding collaborative writing as a relational mode of questioning not only follows a progressive pedagogical approach to knowledge production, it also entails an acknowledgment of each collaborator's position. Such acknowledgment cannot evade ethics or the genealogies of collaboration. As MacDonald states in her account of artistic ollaboration's historical background:

> It was ethics, in the form of social and political questions about how to make a life, that the historical avant-garde wished to include within art's provenance, and it is ethics that runs through the history of collaboration's

38 Claire MacDonald, "All Together Now: Performance and Collaboration," in *Histories and Practices of Live Art,* eds. Deirdre Heddon and Jennie Klein (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 173.

engagement with power, authority and ways of mapping the space between "you" and "I."[39]

The ethically practiced relational mode of questioning is key for collaborative writing to succeed in confronting hegemonic ideas and practices of socio-cultural ordering and control based on exploitation, commodification, and exclusion. As we devise pluralistic modes of engagement with writing, an ethical reading of socio-political interconnectedness unfolds. We attempt to counteract dominant and oppressive ways of knowing, working towards the non-erasure of difference. The process enables multiple directions of interdependent becoming(s). As feminist writer and poet Audre Lorde puts it, "Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged."[40] Just as unsatisfied participants in socio-political structures built on the "institutionalized rejection of difference," we are required to take charge of conceiving "new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference."[41] The collaborative writing and collective building we are experimenting

39 Ibid., 148.
40 Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press, 2007), 112.
41 Ibid., 123.

with attempts a durational alongside-ness that embraces difference beyond coexistence into something more thorough and based in care.

The boundaries between institutional enclosures and the "commons" are renegotiated in our addressing of the notion of the "ends." By investigating what exactly constitutes the "commons" and "institutional" critique through collaboration we are reminded of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's focus on the radical potential of the "undercommons." However, while Moten and Harney look to "prophesy"[42] and "speculative practice,"[43] our project foregrounds the ends as a commoning process, with its promise of finitude, destruction, death, abandonment.

Nevertheless, while both the performance of the undercommons, and of commons in the ends, is apparently powerless and unproductive and therefore defies capitalist logic, compromise is always already engaged by each individual. One must write grants and request funds from private enterprise and public institutions, or have a second job, or capitulate to institutional frameworks, or perform one of the endless other compromises to get by. Rather than be

---

42 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013), 28.
43 Ibid., 110.

and to conceptualize "contemporaneity." Some of us are skeptical of attempts to localize where and when "we" stand, or to even define the "we" of this collective endeavour. We continue to write through these differences and ideas. We work under the circumstance that "contemporaneity" designates a concept that is "made present," as Juliane Rebentisch writes, "in its geographic, cultural, and historical specificity."[15] We would like to invert the reading of "end times," as it often is associated within the context of an "Anthropocene eschatology."[17] which, as Bonneuil and Fressoz argue, represents but a

[14] Dramaturge Bojana Cvejić calls affinity that what binds dramaturgs and artists in a creative process; it does not mean a product oriented, functional approach, but rather a shared concern, that nevertheless allows for some constraint to make a concrete collaboration manifest itself. (Cvejić, Bojana, *The ignorant dramaturg*, Maska, vol.16, no 131-132, pp. 40-53, 2010)
[15] S. Harvey & F. Moten, *The Undercommons: fugitive planning and black study*, 2013: 104.
[16] Rebentisch, 2015: 236.
[17] Northcott, 2015.

12

proliferation of the universalist paradigm of western modernism.[18] We follow Viveiro de Castro and Déborah Danowski in the observation of the specificity and particularity of "ends" and the fact that the end of the world "only has a determinate meaning in these discourses—can only be thought of as possible–on the condition that one determines at the same time for whom this world that ends is a world, who is the worldly or 'worlded' being who *defines the end*."[19] To speak of the "ends of the world"[20] has a way out of the whose worlds are we actually talking about? Who is the subject of that utterance? And

Evan Moritz · May 7, 2021
Note to self: try to find other places throughout the text to use this 'show don't tell' approach to clarify our usage of we* and we.

jan · May 10, 2021
I agree.
Question: Having the asteriks not introduced yet, but using it nevertheless: Confusing? Annoying? Interesting?

jan · May 10, 2021
Or else:
Maybe it is worth to introduce the * only after explaining it, using just (WE/I/OUR) before... and creating a sort of performative break where the authorsubject noticeably changes.

Eero Laine · May 10, 2021
Yes, let's discuss the "*"

Eero Laine · May 10, 2021
And this paragraph marking disagreement or ongoing debate within the authors might come closer to the end of the introductory material. Indeed, it might be a way out of the introductory material and 'into the woods' which has a

generative of cultural capital, the work is degenerative and uses cultural capital to create spaces of shelter from the compromises. The uncompromising form of the commons is configured as "a communism of incommensurability," which Joshua Chambers-Letson describes as "a sphere of social relation structured less by social fictions of possession, equality, and exchange, than by collective, entangled, and historically informed practices of sharing out, just redistribution, sustainability, and being together in difference."[44] Thus, collaborating and commoning among the ends is a mode of being and remaining in transit, wherein ends are located beyond borders, in reaching out for their dismantling.

We are not alone in calling for collaborative methods, and indeed, our contemporary era sees some of the assumptions of the individual author undone—at least in some venues such as wikis and other shared writing and community-based intellectual labor. The collective of writers who produced *Collaborative Futures,* an open access book based on open collaborative methodologies closely related to various forms of coding and wiki development, note the various affordances and impediments to open

---

44 Joshua Chambers-Letson, *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life* (New York University Press, 2018), 9.

collaborative projects such as their book, Wikipedia, and others. The collective asserts, "Those who labor at the margins just to survive have little latitude, or energy, to engage in activities geared to enriching their lives in non-material ways."[45] To work in the arts and humanities, perhaps especially the performing arts, is to take on some level of precarity, even as that precarity affords a certain caché or cultural capital not available to those working at the margins. As the After Performance Working Group reminds us, as scholars and artists in theater and performance studies, "We work within a culture in which we feel pressured by expectations to write as individuals: to differentiate ourselves from others—at times competitively—rather than collectively and on common ground."[46] Indeed, one need only open a journal or page through the catalog of an academic publisher to see that much if not most of the work produced in the fields of the arts and humanities is produced by single authors, apparently working alone and in solitude. We counter this with multiple voices present within each one of us—the manifold "worlds" that any

45 *Collaborative Futures: A Book About the Future of Collaboration, Written Collaboratively* (lowercase press, 2010), 30.
46 After Performance Working Group, "Vulnerability and the Lonely Scholar."

given subject simultaneously inhabits and engages with. In short, we offer not a collaborative future but collaborative and enduring ends.

Rehearsing the Ends

As we have revised and re-revised this text towards publication, engagement across our group has waxed and waned with waves of the pandemic, academic years, and our individual personal, professional, scholarly, and artistic successes and setbacks. At various times throughout the process, some of us have worked synchronously, others asynchronously through email and Google Docs. Our collective authorship and our writing began in the early stages of the pandemic and have been shaped and even facilitated by the pandemic, but such methodologies do not need a pandemic to work. Or do they? We, the authors writing this book, are stumbling, starting, and stopping together with other billions of humans on this planet, fumbling through this pandemic and a warming planet and extreme climate changes and the

neo-conservative politics of populism, nationalism, and "borderism" that it has brought on or amplified. We stammer as we see the world we know change rapidly, fall apart, or be recreated anew. We don't know what to say, write, or do most of the time, between panicking or worrying over our own security, physical wellbeing, health, rights to healthcare, and rights to privacy and to choice. This lack of certainty shapes a lot of our writing process. We come against many hurdles, and there is no manual on how to handle them, to cross over, or to dismantle them.

We do not share the same tools, languages, or formative political experiences, which is a radical contrast to the seemingly monolithic and normative experience of working in a western academy that deals with the humanities, or with performance studies specifically. We do not live in the same world, as Bruno Latour would say.[1] Yet, it has been easier to thematize this and topically deal with it, than to structurally address what this means academically and curatorially, especially as these regimes of power engage with the living body and its aesthetic manifes-

1   Bruno Latour, "'We Don't Seem to Live on the Same Planet': A Fictional Planetarium," in *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth,* eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (MIT Press, 2020).

tations through a field such as performance studies. The scale of these catastrophes is so great that, though we perform our ends differently, we all feel the pressure of an accelerated mourning, a difficulty staying with all the ends that pile up. But there is a shared imperative that we *must* not let these moments slip from our grasp. We joined together in this book to not only share our stories and thoughts of this troubled planet, but to band together, to hold our thoughts in a shared relationship bigger than any one of us. We rehearse the ends as much as we perform them, to re-hear, re-member, recapitulate, and reconcile our relationship to a world that will always be bigger than us. We did this not to make an echo chamber, but a choir practice, finding new harmonies within ourselves and with each other.

THIS CAT: ARE YOU STILL THERE?

4:00 pm

Hi, Bella speaking.

Hi, an injured cat I found was brought to you today and I am wondering how it is?

We don't have cats here. They're elsewhere. I'll have to get your number and call you back.

Oh.

*I must warn you there is a privacy issue, and we may not
be able to give you the information. I will call you shortly.*
Ok, good, thanks.

4:15 pm

*Hi, it's Bella from the Council. You'll need to call another
number. Have you got a pen and paper?*
Yep.
It's 9991 19196.
Got it. Thank you.
Good luck.

4:16 pm

*We are currently closed. Our business hours are from nine
to five weekdays. Please call back during these times.*

Monday 9:05 am

Hello, this is Candy. What can I do for you today?
Is this the CPS? I'm calling about a cat which my local
Council brought to you.
Yes, which cat?
A white cat.
Please hold.
*There was something in the air that night, the stars were
bright, Fernando.*
Are you still there?

Yes, I'm here.

Can I ask what your relationship to the cat is?

Um, I found the cat in my yard. It was in the rain with its head stuck inside a tin can.

We are aware of the incident. What is your relationship to the cat?

Is the cat there?

Are you the owner?

No, I found the cat and reported it.

We cannot disclose any information. There is a privacy issue.

I just want to know how the cat is.

I'm sorry there are privacy issues and we cannot discuss the matter.

Is it ok?

I told you, we cannot discuss the matter with you.

It might belong to a neighbor.

I'm sorry, we cannot discuss the matter. Thanks for calling.

We practice hope(lessness) *and* critique. We open the necessary space to fail in our analysis, seeing iterative and multiple failures to grasp a situation as ungraspable as the anthropocene, a situation that necessitates these varied and plural failures. The scale of the ends can be overwhelming. Sometimes, failure is easier to grasp on a personal level. One of us experienced this sense of hopelessness while trying to care for an in-

jured cat in their neighborhood, as shared throughout this book. The cat's well-being seemed to vanish into a bureaucratic void, and the more they tried to help, the more barriers they encountered. This struggle highlighted how efforts to connect and seek support can feel futile, especially when our usual sources of help seem to be failing us. Systems designed to facilitate our needs often create disconnection and compartmentalization. When the communities we rely on no longer offer the support they used to, we are left grappling with who to turn to, or who or what to blame. The failure and disconnect we feel are real and have grave, isolating consequences. We're left to navigate these challenges, understanding that even though we're not alone, no one is coming to rescue us.

As we draw near to the close of this book, we may have come to the realization that our work has not only carried us through the present moment. Our work, our exchange, our mourning, may be a rehearsal—a rehearsal for working in the face of the ends, for finding space beyond and across institutions. The rehearsal, while tentative, may provide a glimpse at a way to live and be in, and even beyond, the ends. We fail in the same way that actors need to fail in a theatrical rehearsal: to better learn the limits, the (im)possibilities, and to continue to search for

what might work and to recognize it when something good happens. We acknowledge the power in creative practices and the power of performance to make a world in many different forms. The potential in performance can be nefarious as well as healing.

ENDINGS AND INVITATIONS

Prior to this endeavor, we had become accustomed to studying, working, and thinking alone, perhaps believing it was easier to concentrate; occasionally being part of a group, or a reading group, or even a writing group, punctuated collectiveness in study-life. But we are reminded that in practice, the study of performance is hardly ever solitary and time is mostly shared time: rehearsing, debating, performing, debating further, rehearsing more, performing again, with others. Performance, its embodied study, is an ensemble of people, a gathering of energies, an assemblage of ideas, a joint effort—at times conflictual—to create something together. While performance is often experienced as an end, for us it has been an exercise in collaboration—in practice.

Collaborative work is always a negotiation, which is necessarily read through and acted upon through disciplinary but not necessarily academic visions and experience. While our collaborative authorship

Finally, if you were at the most recent meeting and can further clarify these instructions, please do so here — edit, revise, comment, etc.

rehearses a form of commoning, it builds on the collaborative processes of mourning that this group has undertaken together. Even as we advocate, in the face of unrelenting ends, for collective research and writing in the arts and humanities, we know we cannot do this by simply adding authors. The object of study here, like much of performance studies, is not a tangible object. We are writing through a methodology, a way of enacting and performing scholarly and artistic labor, and we hope others will join us.

Our call for radical collaborative authorship has its roots in a number of pressing and urgent ends, including but not limited to colonial structures at the foundation of many of our institutions, precarious labor conditions, myths of progress, and the impending disasters that continue to build due to anthropogenic climate change. Collaborative authorship cannot performatively enact an ending to each of these. It is not only a matter of acknowledging these intrinsic collaborative qualities with regard to ends, but also of fostering them and experiencing how our selves, thoughts, and words are dissolving and transforming as they are being shared, and how this enables a more critical and a deeper relation to ends. This feels especially appropriate in a process of thinking and writing about ends in a time that is so explicitly and

overwhelmingly characterized by endings. Writing this book, we were all in various ways mourning, and sharing this mourning was the desire that made this writing and these meetings happen over the course of the past years. It is a desire that remains, but that now has taken the shape of an invitation. This book is then an invitation to all who read it to continue to discover ways of mourning collectively, to attempt other possibilities of being and working amidst the ends. It is an invitation towards thinking through the ends—to rehearse and perform the ends, together.

Bibliography

Adwan, Ziad. "Imaginary Theatre: Professionalising Theatre in the Levant 1940–1990." *Journal of Global Theatre History* 3, no. 1 (2019): 1–19. https://gthj.ub.uni-muenchen.de/gthj/article/view/5106.

After Performance Working Group. "Vulnerability and the Lonely Scholar." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 27, no. 2 (2017). https://www.contemporarytheatrereview.org/2017/vulnerability-and-the-lonely-scholar/.

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life.* Duke University Press, 2017.

AIATSIS. "We Hereby Make Protest." *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.* https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/day-of-mourning.

Akita, Sakurako, Yoko Wada, Keiji Wada, and Harumi Torii. "Variation and Social Influence of Bowing Behavior

by Sika Deer (*Cervus nippon*)." *Journal of Ethology* 34 (2016): 89–96. DOI: 10.1007/s10164-015-0451-7.

Alberro, Alexander. "Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique." In *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson. MIT Press, 2009.

Amy de la Bretèque, Estelle. "Vocalisation des émotions dans les funérailles yézidies d'Arménie." In *Mythes, rites et émotions: Les funérailles le long de la Route de la Soie,* edited by Anna Caiozzo. Honoré Champion, 2016.

Art Tunnel. "Le Nguyen Manh – Artist." *Art Tunnel ~ Vietnamese Paintings,* December 25, 2013. https://arttunnel.wordpress.com/2013/12/25/le-nguyen-manh-artist/.

Auslander, Philip. "Live from Cyberspace, or, I was sitting at my computer this guy appeared he thought I was a bot." In *Critical Theory and Performance,* edited by Janelle Rienelt and Joseph Roach. University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words.* Edited by J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà. Harvard University Press, 1975.

Baarle, Kristof van, Rustom Bharucha, Felipe Cervera, Steve Dixon, Eva Horn, Kyoko Iwaki, Eero Laine, Zarina Muhammad, Amanda Pina, and Sankar Venkateswaran. "Collaboration and Co-finitude: An Agenda of Care and Ends." *Performance*

Research 27, nos. 6–7 (2022): 15–25. DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2022.2197430.

Baehr, Antonia. "Abecedarium Bestiarum: Portraits of Affinities in Animal Metaphors." *Berlin,* May 3–5, 2013.

Bailey, Richard, Daniel McLoughlin, and Jessica Whyte. "Editors' Introduction: Form-of-Life: Giorgio Agamben, Ontology and Politics." *Theory & Event* 13, no. 1 (2010). DOI: 10.1353/tae.0.0122.

Balibar, Étienne. "Philosophies of the Transindividual: Spinoza, Marx, Freud." Translated by Mark G.E. Kelly. *Australasian Philosophical Review* 2, no. 1 (2018): 5–25. DOI: 10.1080/24740500.2018.1514958.

Baehr, Antonia, Pauline Boudry, Dodo Heidenreich, Isabell Spengler, Christian Kesten, Stefan Pente, Ida Wilde (Keren Ida Nathan), Lucile Desamory, Valérie Castan, Andrea Neumann, Sabine Ercklentz, Steffi Weismann, William Wheeler, Frédérick Bigot (electroniCat). *ABeCedarium Bestiarium: Portraits of Affinities in Animal Metaphors.* far° festival des arts vivants, 2012–2014. https://far-nyon.ch/assets/publications/extrait_%20 ABC.pdf.

Bharucha, Rustom. *The Second Wave: Reflections on the Pandemic through Photography, Performance and Public Culture.* Seagull Books, 2022.

Bonnet, François-Jacques. *Après la mort: Essai sur l'envers du présent.* Éditions de l'Éclat, 2017.

Bonneuil, Christophe, and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History, and Us.* Verso, 2017.

Bormann, Natalie. "The Lost Dimension? A Spatial Reading of US Weaponisation of Space." In *Securing Outer Space,* edited by Natalie Bormann and Michael Sheehan. Routledge, 2009.

Brown, Kevin, Felipe Cervera, Kyoko Iwaki, Eero Laine, and Kristof van Baarle. "Antemortem: Collaborative Research in Theatre and Performance Studies." *Global Performance Studies* 4, no. 2 (2021). DOI: 10.33303/gpsv4n2a1.

———. "Postmortem: On Process and Collaborative Editing." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 36, no. 1 (2021): 13–21. DOI: 10.1353/dtc.2021.0038.

Bruce, Jan. "Change Is the New Normal: How Will You Handle It?" *Forbes,* September 5, 2018. www.forbes.com/sites/janbruce/2018/09/05/change-is-the-new-normal-how-will-you-handle-it/.

Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence.* Verso, 2020.

———. Review of *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence. Verso Books.* https://www.versobooks.com/books/3706-care-manifesto.

Care Collective, The: Andreas Chatzidakis, Jamie Hakim, Jo Litter, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal. *The*

Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence. Verso, 2020.

Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* Translated by Kathleen Blamey. MIT Press, 1987.

Cavanagh, Connor Joseph, and David Himmelfarb. "'Much in Blood and Money': Necropolitical Ecology on the Margins of the Uganda Protectorate." *Antipode* 47, no. 1 (2015): 55–73. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12093.

Ceballos, Gerardo, Paul R. Ehrlich, Anthony D. Barnosky, Andrés García, Robert M. Pringle, and Todd M. Palmer. "Accelerated Modern Human–Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction." *Science Advances* 1, no. 5 (2015). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1400253.

Cervera, Felipe. "Planetary Performance Studies." *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017). https://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/gps-1-1-3/.

Cervera, Felipe, Shawn Chua, João Florêncio, Eero Laine, and Evelyn Wan. "Thicker States." *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017). http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/thicker-states/.

Cervera, Felipe, and Eero Laine. "The Planet, Everyday: Towards Collaborative Performance Studies." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2020): 90–107. DOI: 10.1080/10462937.2019.1620960.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Climate of History: Four Theses." *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009): 197–222. DOI: 10.1086/596640.

Chambers-Letson, Joshua. *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life.* New York University Press, 2018.

Chaudhuri, Una. "'There Must Be a Lot of Fish in That Lake': Toward an Ecological Theater." *Theater* 25, no. 1 (1994): 23–31. DOI: 10.1215/01610775-25-1-23.

Chua, Shawn, Sozita Goudouna, Adham Hafez, Eero Laine, Sarah Lucie, Juliana Moraes, Malin Palani, Rumen Rachev, and Leah Sidi. "Theatre Essentials in Three Acts: Collaboration, Care, Time." *Theatre Topics* 31, no. 2 (2021): 99–111. DOI: 10.1353/tt.2021.0025.

Collaborative Futures: A Book About the Future of Collaboration, Written Collaboratively. lowercase press, 2010. https://archive.flossmanuals.net/collaborative-futures/index.html.

Cools, Guy. *Performing Mourning: Laments in Contemporary Art.* Valiz, 2021.

Crépon, Marc. *Vivre avec: La pensée de la mort et la mémoire des guerres.* Hermann, 2008.

Cromsigt, Joris P.G.M., Dries P.J. Kuijper, Marius Adam, Robert L. Beschta, Marcin Churski, Amy Eycott, Graham I.H. Kerley, Atle Mysterud, Krzysztof Schmidt, and Kate West. "Hunting for Fear: Innovating Management of Human–Wildlife Conflicts." *Journal of Applied Ecology* 50 (2013): 544–49. DOI: 10.1111/1365-2664.12076/.

Culp, Andrew. *Dark Deleuze.* University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Cvejić, Bojana. "The Ignorant Dramaturg." *Maska* 16, nos. 131–32 (2010): 40–53. http://sarma.be/docs/2864.

Danowski, Déborah, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. *The Ends of the World.* Polity, 2017.

DeBoom, Meredith J. "Climate Necropolitics: Ecological Civilization and the Distributive Geographies of Extractive Violence in the Anthropocene." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 111, no. 3 (2021): 900–912. DOI: 10.1080/24694452.2020.1843995.

Deleuze, Gilles. "The Exhausted." Translated by Anthony Uhlmann. *SubStance* 24, no. 3 (1995): 3–28. DOI: 10.2307/3685005.

Demarco, Emily. "Physics Paper Sets Record with More than 5000 Authors." *Nature,* May 18, 2015. https://www.science.org/content/article/physics-paper-sets-record-more-5000-authors.

Demos, T.J. *Beyond the World's End: Arts of Living at the Crossing.* Duke University Press, 2020.

Derrida, Jaques. *Writing and Difference.* Translated by Alan Bass. University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Despret, Vinciane. "Afterword: It Is an Entire World that Has Disappeared." Translated by Matthew Chrulew. In *Extinction Studies: Stories of Time, Death, and Generations,* edited by Deborah Bird Rose, Thom Van Dooren, and Matthew Chrulew. Columbia University Press, 2017.

———. *Au bonheur des morts: Récits de ceux qui restent.* La Découverte, 2015.

Dockx, Nico, and Pascal Gielen, eds. *Commonism: A New Aesthetics of the Real.* Valiz, 2018.

Eckersall, Peter. "Performance, Mourning and the Long View of Nuclear Space." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 7 (2015): 4278. https://apjjf.org/2015/13/6/Peter-Eckersall/4278.html.

Ede, Lisa S., and Andrea A. Lunsford. *Singular Texts / Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing.* Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Ely, Karmenlara. "Against Cultural Appropriation." *Black Box Theatre Publication,* 2017. https://www.blackbox.no/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/.AgainstCulturalAppropriation_KarmenlaraEly.pdf.

Federici, Silvia. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle.* PM Press, 2012.

Ferdinand, Malcom. *A Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World.* Translated by Anthony Paul Smith. Polity Press, 2021.

———. *Une écologie décoloniale: Penser l'écologie depuis le monde caribéen.* Éditions du Seuil, 2019.

Fisher, Mark. *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures.* Zer0 Books, 2014.

Fraser, Andrea. "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique." *Art Forum* 44, no. 1 (2005):

278–83. https://www.artforum.com/print/200507/
from-the-critique-of-institutions-to-an-institution-of-
critique-9407.

Freedom Theatre, The. https://thefreedomtheatre.org/.

Gaspar, Renata Cernadas. "On the Role of Friendship in
Artistic Collaboration: Personal Notes on the Future of
Work." *Owela–The Future of Work,* May 2, 2019. https://
issuu.com/owela/docs/owela_publication/26.

Gates, Sarah Louise. "Ecological Interconnectedness:
Entwined Selves, Transcendent and Immanent." In
*Roots, Routes and a New Awakening: Beyond One and
Many and Alternative Planetary Futures,* edited by Ananta
Kumar Giri. Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.*
Anchor Books, 1959.

Gros, Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu. "Carrying the Nest: (Re)writing
History Through Embodied Research." *Journal of
Embodied Research* 2, no. 1 (2019): 3, video, 23:30. DOI:
10.16995/jer.23.

Guattari, Félix. *The Three Ecologies.* Translated by Ian
Pindar and Paul Sutton. Athlone Press, 2000.

Halstead, John. "What Is Post-Doom?" *Another End of the
World Is Possible.* https://anotherendoftheworld.org/
what-is-post-doom/.

Hamington, Maurice. "Politics Is Not a Game: The Radical
Potential of Care." In *Care Ethics and Political Theory,*

edited by Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Han, Byung-Chul. *The Disappearance of Rituals: A Topology of the Present*. Translated by Daniel Steuer. Polity Press, 2020.

Haraway, Donna. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin." *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (2015): 159–65. DOI: 10.1215/22011919-3615934.

———. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth*. Belknap Press, 2009.

———. *Empire*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

———. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. Penguin, 2004.

Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Minor Compositions, 2013.

Hoang, Trung, Duong Trung Le, Ha Nguyen, and Nguyen Dinh Tuan Vuong. "Is Tomorrow Another Day? Coping with an Environmental Disaster: Evidence from Vietnam." Conference paper. North East Universities Development Consortium, Ithaca, NY, October 27–28, 2018. http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/NEUDC/paper_541.pdf.

Julius, Sarah. *Re-performance, Mourning and Death: Specters of the Past.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-84774-6.

Kamola, Isaac, and Eli Meyerhoff. "Creating Commons: Divided Governance, Participatory Management, and Struggles against Enclosure in the University." *Polygraph* 21 (2009): 5–27.

Keil, Marta. "The Practice of Listening to What Is Not There Yet." Flanders Art Institute, May 5, 2020. https://www.kunsten.be/en/now-in-the-arts/the-practice-of-listening-to-what-is-not-there-yet/.

———. "What is the Purpose of Institutional Critique Today?" Translated by Joanna Błachnio. *Polish Theatre Journal* 1–2, nos. 3–4 (2017).

Kessler, David. *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief.* Scribner, 2019.

Khajehi, Yassaman, and Christian Biet. "From Ritual to Performance: Ta'zieh in Iran Today." *Iranian Studies* 56, no. 4 (2023): 671–84. DOI: 10.1017/irn.2023.43.

Kolb, Lucie, and Gabriel Flückiger. "New Institutionalism Revisited." *On Curating* 21 (2014): 5–17. https://www.on-curating.org/issue-21-reader/new-institutionalism-revisited.html.

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History.* Henry Holt & Co., 2014.

Kopenawa, Davi, and Bruce Albert. *A queda do céu: Palavras de um xamã Yanomami.* Translated by Beatriz Perrone-Moisés. Companhia das Letras, 2015.

Krenak, Ailton. *O amanhã não está à venda.* Companhia das Letras, 2020.

Kunst, Bojana. *Artist at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism.* Zer0 Books, 2015.

Latour, Bruno. "To Modernise or Ecologise: That is the Question." Translated by Charis Cussins. In *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millenium,* edited by Bruce Braun and Noel Castree. Routledge, 1998.

———. "'We Don't Seem to Live on the Same Planet': A Fictional Planetarium." In *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth,* edited by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel. MIT Press, 2020.

Latour, Bruno, and Steve Woolgar. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts.* Princeton University Press, 1986.

Lavery, Carl. "Introduction: Performance and Ecology: What Can Theatre Do?" *Green Letters* 20, no. 3 (2016): 229–36. DOI: 10.1080/14688417.2016.1206695.

Leader, Darian. *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia, and Depression.* Graywolf Press, 2008.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre.* Translated by Karen Jürs-Munby. Routledge, 2006.

Lertzman, Renee. *Environmental Melancholia: Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement.* Routledge, 2015.

Lerner, L. Scott. "Mourning and Subjectivity: From Bersani to Proust, Klein, and Freud." *Diacritics* 37, no. 1 (2007): 41–53. DOI: 10.1353/dia.0.0019.

Literaturforum im Brecht-Haus. "Postpandemisches Theater: Die Krise der Versammlung." *YouTube,* November 11, 2020. www.youtube.com/watch?v=wY0gKOSIU6I.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.* Crossing Press, 2007.

Loutzaki, Irene. "The Dance of Zalongos: An Invented Tradition on Canvas." In *Imaging Dance: Visual Representations of Dancers and Dancing,* edited by Barbara Sparti and Judy Van Zile. Georg Olms Verlag, 2011.

MacCormack, Patricia. *The Ahuman Manifesto: Activism for the End of the Anthropocene.* Bloomsbury, 2020.

MacDonald, Claire. "All Together Now: Performance and Collaboration." In *Histories and Practices of Live Art,* edited by Deirdre Heddon and Jennie Klein. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Malpede, Karen. "The Necessity of a New Green Federal Theatre Project." *HowlRound Theatre Commons,* July 30, 2019. https://howlround.com/necessity-new-green-federal-theatre-project.

Manh, Le Nguyen. *Saatchi Art.* https://www.saatchiart.com/lenguyenmanh.

Manh, Le Nguyen, Le Van Son, and Christian Falsnaes. "Tri Tue Rac / Trash Mind." *Hanoi Future Art.* Hà Nội, March 13, 2009. https://hanoigrapevine.com/2009/03/lang_entrash-mindlang_enlang_vitri-tu%E1%BB%87-raclang_vi/.

Marx, Karl. "Theses on Feuerbach." In *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy,* edited by Lewis S. Feuer. Anchor Books, 1959.

Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." Translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40. DOI: 10.1215/08992363-15-1-11.

McKenzie, Jon. "Is Performance Studies Imperialist?" *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 4 (2006): 5–8. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4492707.

———. *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance.* Routledge, 2001.

Mieszkowski, Jan. "Beyond the Death Principle." *Cultural Critique* 93 (2016): 151–67. DOI: 10.5749/culturalcritique.93.2016.0151.

Mikhaiel, Yasmin Zacaria. "Grief as Rebellion." *Dramaturgs' Network.* https://www.dramaturgy.co.uk/single-post/invisible-diaries-yasmin-zacaria-mikhaiel-grief-as-rebellion.

Milstein, Cindy. "In the Era of COVID-19, Collective Grief Is Rebellion." Interview by Kelly Hayes. *Movement Memos, Truthout,* May 27, 2020. Audio, 41:10. https://truthout.

org/audio/in-the-era-of-covid-19-collective-grief-is-rebellion/.

———, ed. *Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief.* AK Press, 2021.

Nichanian, Marc. *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century.* Gomidas Institute, 2002.

Northcott, Michael. "Eschatology in the Anthropocene: From the Chronos of Deep Time to the *Kairos* of the Age of Humans." In *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch,* edited by Clive Hamilton, Christophe Bonneuil, and François Gemenne. Routledge, 2015.

Okoyomon, Precious. "The End of the World." *Serpentine Gallery.* London, July 2, 2019. https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/cos-x-serpentine-galleries-park-nights-2019-precious-okoyomon-end-world/.

Otake, Eiko. "A Body in Fukushima." *Eiko Otake.* https://www.eikootake.org/a-body-in-fukushima.

Otake, Eiko, and William Johnston. *A Body in Fukushima.* Wesleyan University Press, 2021.

Palani, Malin. "Performance with Others." PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2015.

Pasolini, Pier Paolo, dir. *Teorema.* Garzanti, 1968.

Phelan, Peggy. "Introduction: The Ends of Performance." In *The Ends of Performance,* edited by Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane. New York University Press, 1998.

———. *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories.* Routledge, 1997.

———. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance.* Routledge, 1993.

Pimm, S.L., C.N. Jenkins, R. Abell, T.M. Brooks, J.L. Gittleman, L.N. Joppa, P.H. Raven, C.M. Roberts, and J.O. Sexton. "The Biodiversity of Species and Their Rates of Extinction, Distribution, and Protection." *Science* 344, no. 6187 (2014). DOI: 10.1126/science.1246752.

Popa, Alina, and Florin Flueras. *Unsorcery.* Punch, 2018.

Rayner, Steve. "Uncomfortable Knowledge: The Social Construction of Ignorance in Science and Environmental Policy Discourses." *Economy and Society* 41, no. 1 (2012): 107–25. DOI: 10.1080/03085147.2011.637335.

Read, Jason. "The Production of Subjectivity: From Transindividuality to the Commons." *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* 70 (2010): 113–31. DOI: 10.3898/NEWF.70.07.2010.

Rebentisch, Juliane. "The Contemporaneity of Contemporary Art." *New German Critique* 42, no. 1 (2015): 223–37. DOI: 10.1215/0094033X-2753672.

Ruiz, Sandra, and Hypatia Vourloumis. *Formless Formation: Vignettes for the End of This World.* Minor Compositions, 2021.

Schäfers, Marlene. "Archived Voices, Acoustic Traces, and the Reverberations of Kurdish History in Modern Turkey." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 61, no. 2 (2019): 447–73. DOI: 10.1017/S0010417519000112.

Schneider, Rebecca. "Performance Remains." *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): 100–108. DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2001.10871792.

Schuttler, S.G., A.W. Parsons, T.D. Forrester, M.C. Baker, W.J. McShea, R. Costello, and R. Kays. "Deer on the Lookout: How Hunting, Hiking and Coyotes Affect White-Tailed Deer Vigilance." *Journal of Zoology* 301, no. 4 (2017): 320–27. DOI: 10.1111/jzo.12416.

Servigne, Pablo, Raphaël Stevens, and Gauthier Chapelle. *Another End of the World Is Possible: Living the Collapse (and Not Merely Surviving It).* Translated by Geoffrey Samuel. Polity Press, 2021.

She She Pop. "Oratorium: Kollektive Andacht zu einem wohlgehütetem Geheimnis." *She She Pop Produktionen.* https://sheshepop.de/oratorium.

Shukaitis, Stevphen, and Joanna Figiel. "Publishing to Find Comrades: Constructions of Temporality and Solidarity in Autonomous Print Cultures." *Lateral* 8, no. 2 (2019). https://csalateral.org/issue/8-2/publishing-comrades-temporality-solidarity-autonomous-print-cultures-shukaitis-figiel/. DOI: 10.25158/L8.2.3.

Simon, Taryn. "An Occupation of Loss." *Park Avenue Armory.* New York, September 13–25, 2016. https://

www.armoryonpark.org/programs_events/detail/
taryn_simon.

Simondon, Gilbert. "The Position of the Problem of
Ontogenesis." Translated by Gregory Flanders.
Parrhesia 7 (2009): 4–16.

Sontag, Susan. "On Style." In *Against Interpretation: And
Other Essays.* Dell Publishing, 1966.

Spatz, Ben. *Blue Sky Body: Thresholds for Embodied Research.*
Routledge, 2020.

Stiegler, Bernard, and Irit Rogoff. "Transindividuation."
e-flux 14 (2010). https://www.e-flux.com/
journal/14/61314/transindividuation/.

"Study Finds Human-Driven Mass Extinction Is Eliminating
Entire Branches of the Tree of Life." *Stanford Report,*
September 18, 2023. https://news.stanford.edu/
stories/2023/09/human-driven-mass-extinction-
eliminating-entire-genera.

Taylor, Diana, and Marcos Steuernagel, eds. *What Is
Performance Studies?* Duke University Press, 2015. .

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *The Mushroom at the End of
the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins.*
Princeton University Press, 2015.

Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena,
and Feifei Zhou. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human
Anthropocene.* Stanford University Press, 2020. DOI:
10.21627/2020fa.

Turner, Victor W. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play.* Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

———. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* Aldine, 2011.

VietArtSpace. *Facebook* Group. Archived at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190828122800/https://www.facebook.com/VietArtSpace/.

United Nations Country Team. "Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?" *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,* August 18, 2012. https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/gaza-2020-liveable-place.

"UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating.'" *United Nations,* May 6, 2019. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/.

Valentine, Ben. "Vietnamese Artists Respond to Marine Disaster Through #IChooseFish." *Hyperallergic,* June 27, 2016. https://hyperallergic.com/305568/vietnamese-artists-respond-to-marine-disaster-through-ichoosefish/.

Vandevelde, Michiel. "Dances of Death." Brussels, June 12, 2021.

Walker, Mike, Sigfus Johnsen, Sune Olander Rasmussen, Trevor Popp, Jørgen-Peder Steffensen, Phil Gibbard,

Wim Hoek, John Lowe, John Andrews, Svante Björck, Les C. Cwynar, Konrad Hughen, Peter Kershaw, Bernd Kromer, Thomas Litt, David J. Lowe, Takeshi Nakagawa, Rewi Newnham, and Jakob Schwander. "Formal Definition and Dating of the GSSP (Global Stratotype Section and Point) for the Base of the Holocene Using the Greenland NGRIP Ice Core, and Selected Auxiliary Records." *Journal of Quaternary Science* 24, no. 1 (2009): 3–17. DOI: 10.1002/jqs.1227.

Wagler, Ron. "The Anthropocene Mass Extinction: An Emerging Curriculum Theme for Science Educators." *The American Biology Teacher* 73, no. 2 (2011): 78–83. DOI: 10.1525/abt.2011.73.2.5.

Whittaker, Ian. "What Is the Environmental Impact of the SpaceX Falcon Heavy Launch?" *BBC Science Focus,* February 12, 2018. https://www.sciencefocus.com/space/what-is-the-environmental-impact-of-the-spacex-falcon-heavy-launch/.

"WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard." *World Health Organization.* https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/deaths.

Wolska, Aleksandra. "Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance." *Theatre Journal* 57, no. 1 (2005): 83–95. DOI: 10.1353/tj.2005.0040.

Wray, K. Brad. "The Epistemic Significance of Collaborative Research." *Philosophy of Science* 69, no. 1 (2002): 150–68. DOI: 10.1086/338946.

WWHIVDD Community. "What Does a COVID-19 Doula Do?" *ONE Institute.* https://www.onearchives.org/what-does-a-covid19-doula-do-zine/.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Melancholy and the Act." *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2000): 657–81. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344326.

———. *Pandemic! 2: Chronicles of a Time Lost.* Polity Press, 2021.

Zwicky, Jan. "A Ship from Delos." In Robert Bringhurst and Jan Zwicky, *Learning to Die: Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis.* University of Regina Press, 2018.